

FIRST THINGS

THEOCRACY!
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THEOCRACY!

Ross Douthat

THE
ORTHODOX
IMPERATIVE

Avery Dulles

ISLAM &
WOMEN

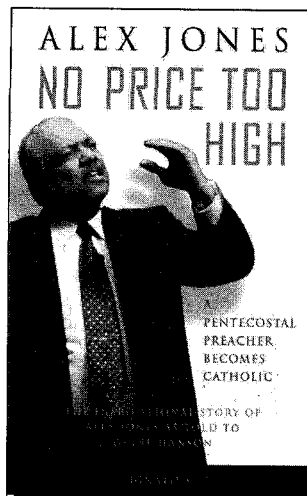
Lauren Weiner

BAPTIST
REVOLUTIONS

Timothy George

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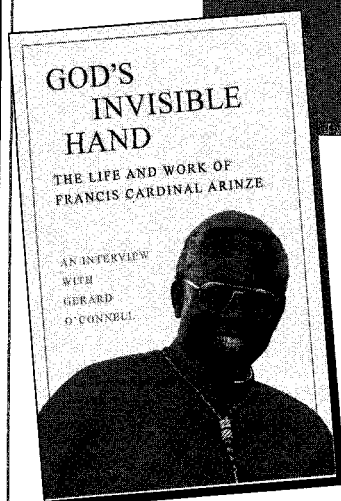
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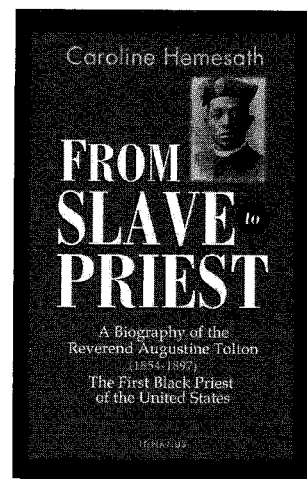
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The Wheaton from the Chaff

As a Wheaton alumnus who has been received into the Catholic Church—and thereby lost a chair at another evangelical school, Gordon College in Massachusetts—I read with interest Alan Jacobs' account of Wheaton College's dismissal of a convert to Catholicism ("To Be a Christian College," April).

I certainly support Jacobs in every point he made. And may I say also that I have immense admiration for President Litfin. I consider him a trusted friend. Insofar as his task is to maintain Wheaton's specifically *evangelical* identity, he acted well. I understand the dismissed professor, Joshua Hochschild, also takes this view.

As one whose background lay in the most praiseworthy sectors of American evangelicalism, and who considers the evangelicals to be very strong allies of the ancient Church, I find myself in the odd position of often explaining (to their credit) the evangelicals to Catholics, and at the same time assisting brilliant and devout young men, by this time numberless, in their pilgrimage toward the fullness of the Faith as that has been understood and taught by the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church from the beginning.

I suppose that any orthodox Catholic would want to urge, in the conversation among academics anyway, that primary sources, so to speak, be brought into play. Having been a Protestant for fifty years, I am aware of the views that prevail in that quarter of Christendom on the big questions: the papacy, the Blessed Virgin, the Eucharist, the priesthood, and the sacraments. My experience, even in the higher reaches of evangel-

ical academia, most notably in the seminaries, is that *once you have explained what the Church actually teaches on a given point*, the rejoinder is rarely, "That is heresy." Rather, one hears often, "Oh. I had never thought of that." Meanwhile, I have often pointed out to Catholic audiences that the reason their Protestant friends think that Catholics worship the Virgin Mary is that a lot of Catholics think that Catholics worship the Virgin Mary. The list in this connection is a very long one.

I would wish, most sedulously, to invite my evangelical brothers-in-arms, in this epoch when the Faith itself is being driven into the defensive by titanic forces, to consult such sources as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the documents of Vatican II, and to read such authors as Romano Guardini, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Karl Adam, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Louis Bouyer, and *all* the encyclicals of John Paul II. I think they will find it all fruitful, exhilarating, and even perhaps bracing.

Thomas Howard
St. John's Seminary
Boston, Massachusetts

Being both a graduate of the English department at Wheaton College and an Episcopal clergyman, I was doubly intrigued to see how Alan Jacobs would consider the college's decision not to renew Joshua Hochschild's contract. At almost every turn, I found myself in agreement with Jacobs, most especially in his assertion that "it is important to avoid the claim that the differences between Protestants and Catholics are insignificant," while at the same time maintaining that there is a great diversity among Protestants at the college itself.

My hesitation, however, surfaced when Jacobs included Anglicans within a list of Protestant bodies represented at Wheaton. Since Jacobs is a self-confessed Episcopalian, I would have thought that he would have included in his discussion the shifting sand upon which Anglicans stand between these two extremes within this discussion. I stand, as an Anglican, in what is clearly the "Catholic" camp, and I would assert that Anglicanism, in its ideal form, maintains a much greater concomitance with the Roman Catholic Church than with any other Protestant body.

I treasure and am grateful for my experience at Wheaton College (where I became an Anglican, incidentally) and would be honored to be able to teach the kinds of students Wheaton consistently attracts. But if the Statement of Faith as articulated by President Litfin remains the official interpretation, I could not, as an Anglican, sign that statement in good conscience. If Wheaton is going to clarify its position regarding how the Statement of Faith is to be read in light of Roman Catholics, just consideration should also be given to the many Anglicans who share with most Roman Catholics the kinds of assumptions that make them "not Protestants" in Litfin's estimation.

Rev. Matthew S.C. Olver
Church of the Incarnation
Dallas, Texas

In his intriguing article, Alan Jacobs asks, "Would the clause in the Statement of Faith affirming that 'all human beings are born with a sinful nature that leads them to sin in thought, word, and deed' need to be revised to make room for those who believe in Mary's immaculate conception?" Allow me to ask as a follow-up: Could Martin Luther, given his views on the Immaculate Conception, teach at Wheaton? Suppose we construe Wheaton's Statement of Faith to require those who teach there

to subscribe to the Reformer's meaning of justification by grace through faith. Would Augustine, given his views on inherent righteousness, grace-infused merit, and final justification, be allowed to teach there?

As an evangelical who teaches at an evangelical institution, I have nothing but the deepest respect for Wheaton College and for its place within evangelical higher education. But perhaps evangelical institutions of higher learning could benefit from a serious reexamination of our policies as to who can teach at our institutions. There is something at least paradoxical about Protestant statements of faith that would keep Luther or Augustine from teaching at Protestant schools.

Paul R. DeHart
Lee University
Cleveland, Tennessee

As an evangelical Christian in the mainline Presbyterian Church, I have had my faith renewed by the writings of C.S. Lewis. On several occasions, I have visited the Wade Center on the Wheaton campus and have benefited greatly from the writings not only of Lewis but also from the other six authors whose work is deposited there. Reading these seven authors has also awakened my catholic sensibilities. It has made me aware that, as Lewis says, "those who are at the heart of each division are all closer to one another than those who are at the fringes."

It occurs to me that of the seven authors represented in the Wade Center, none can be classified as evangelical in the sense that the word is used today. Two were Roman Catholic (Chesterton and Tolkien), and the others (including Lewis) all had some doctrinal positions that would not be in agreement with the Wheaton Statement of Faith. Indeed, none of the seven authors would be able to be hired to teach at Wheaton!

William J. McClain
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

On reading Alan Jacobs' account of the inability of Wheaton College to tolerate even one Roman Catholic professor in its community, a phrase came to my mind: The Church needs to breathe with all three of its lungs. I mean, of course, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy. These are the three main branches of Christian believers that have come through the twists and turns of history to our present day. Each has well-educated and articulate representatives who could serve with distinction on the Wheaton College faculty and contribute to its mission effectively. If the administration of the college is not able to see that because of deep-seated anti-Catholic prejudices, then there is no other word to describe the situation than small-mindedness. What else can one say about a school that takes pride in its Marion Wade Center—an advanced research collection featuring Catholics such as G.K. Chesterton and J.R.R. Tolkien—if the school cannot fathom the idea that they, or Eastern Orthodox or Catholic experts on them, could actually be members of the faculty?

If C.S. Lewis, the centerpiece of the Wade Center, were here today, he would be appalled at the idea that Wheaton is dumbing itself down by excluding Catholics from its faculty. I'm sure he could find some way to put the double-standard logic that allows Catholic *students* to attend Wheaton College into the words of Screwtape the devil.

What are the fruits of the Reformation? Either an insipid and self-dissolving liberalism or a neurotic fundamentalism or a small-minded and scandalously anti-intellectual (according to Wheaton's own Mark Noll) evangelicalism. If this is the prism through which God's light shines, then we need a different prism. Perhaps we should be asking not "Is the Reformation over?" but "Was the Reformation a mistake?" If Wheaton College is the best fruits of

the Reformation, as it no doubt thinks of itself as being, then the answer to the latter question seems to be yes. This cannot possibly be what the Wheaton community desires as the result of its attitudes and policies.

Charles Kilby Bellinger
Arlington, Texas

As usual, Alan Jacobs is very irenic and winsome in his arguments. But I am not persuaded. While some evangelicals no doubt believe that the difference between Catholics and Protestants comes down to how each regards the Scriptures, I doubt that most theologians would agree. The fundamental difference has always been one of soteriology, and from that arises a difference in how each approaches the Scriptures. No doubt, as Jacobs argues, there are many common grounds on which evangelicals and Catholics may meet, but the theological differences are still significant enough that few evangelical colleges will wish to be placed in the ironic position of judging the "orthodoxy" of a Roman Catholic applicant to the faculty. Would such a test be the candidate's adherence to the historic teachings of the Magisterium? Or to a new standard by which they would hope to find (or create) an "evangelicalized" Catholic? If Jacobs' vision comes into being, it is likely to be at a brand-new institution, not at an established one such as Wheaton.

William Reichert
Rolling Hills Estates, California

Alan Jacobs' nuanced attempt to explain the tension at Wheaton College over a Catholic faculty member avoids the elephant in the room: Evangelicals who form the constituency of Wheaton reject most of the core beliefs of Roman Catholicism. Likewise, Roman Catholicism rejects the core beliefs of such evangelicals. It is often considered impolite to mention these profound differences. Jacobs gingerly touches on a

few but generally obscures them beneath a mountain of multifaceted qualifiers and subtle distinctions. Without rancor or malice, we need to define those irreconcilable differences.

The large majority of evangelicals (I am one) do not believe in sacramental theology nor in the special role of a "priest." We believe there is but one mediator between man and God, Christ Jesus. As our high priest, he is all-sufficient. Thus, no other mediators or mediating works are necessary—no saints, no Mary, no penances, no indulgences. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. While the typical evangelical loves his church, he does not believe that the church contributes to one's salvation. The church points to Christ and proclaims Christ but does not add anything to the finished work of Christ. No pope is necessary. No human interpreter of Christ and his doctrine is infallible. No magisterium is ultimately authoritative over all Christians. The Church has leaders, but they arise not through a strict, formalized rule of apostolic succession but by a less structured process of discernment and deployment. Though not every Christian is a leader, every Christian is a member of a "royal priesthood" gifted for a ministry of some kind.

The president of Wheaton rightly insists on preserving the evangelical, Protestant heritage—the DNA—of the college. Professor Hochschild is playing a crafty little game by pretending his Catholicism is compatible with Wheaton. He should leave graciously and cheerfully instead of pretending that the Reformation has expired.

Gary Hardaway
Lynden, Washington

Kudos to Alan Jacobs for his charitable and balanced article on Wheaton's decision not to renew Joshua Hochschild's contract because of his reception into the

Roman Catholic Church. Jacobs walks a middle ground on the issue, and in this case I believe that, by and large, the middle ground is the area where wisdom is to be found. I suspect that, in this context, the middle ground may also be a courageous place to take a stand.

Jacobs' article illustrates, it seems to me, the great need for evangelical colleges like Wheaton to face head-on the question of Catholic faculty. Jacobs mentions "Arminians and Calvinists, Anglicans and Dispensationalists, Baptists, Nazarenes, Plymouth Brethren." These folk, he argues, may disagree on quite a few things, "but they all accept a doctrinal statement that draws heavily on the Nicene Creed. More important in the daily life of the college, they all *use* the Bible in a similar way."

This may be true of Wheaton, but unfortunately, many of the evangelicals I meet in Christian colleges hardly know the Nicene Creed, and they certainly do not all use the Bible in a similar way.

Some of them are quite happy using the Bible according to the dictates of Enlightenment principles, others believe that we need to read the Bible literally wherever possible, and again others believe that individual Bible texts are there primarily to give therapeutic support to their subjective quest for emotional and spiritual healing. Perhaps as evangelicals we need to learn from Catholics, today more so than before, precisely because we have such a wide variety of approaches to Holy Scripture. As evangelicals, we need our Catholic brothers and sisters to remind us that the interpretation of scripture is not a purely personal matter. If there is a commonality in the "use" of the Bible among the various Protestant groups Jacobs mentions, too often such commonality lies in a complete disregard of ecclesial guidelines for interpretation.

Much of this has to do, I believe, with the lack of serious ecclesiology-

cal awareness among evangelicals. Which church one attends is generally a matter of relative indifference, and Jacobs seems to suggest that adding Catholics to the Wheaton faculty would put a strain on such ecclesial indifference: "What would it do to the Christian unity and fellowship of the faculty to have some among us who (while not doubting that the rest of us are Christians) do not believe that we belong to the Church in the form intended by Christ?"

The question is a fair one to ask. But do we need to believe that each person on the Wheaton faculty agrees that all other faculty "belong to the Church in the form intended by Christ"? Does the melting pot of evangelicalism really require Anglicans to believe that Baptists belong to the Church in the form intended by Christ, regardless of the question of infant baptism? Have Plymouth Brethren really come to accept that their fellow Christians in a Reformed church belong to the Church in the form intended by Christ? Perhaps today this is indeed largely the situation in which we find ourselves. If so, then with Catholicism—and with most Protestants and evangelicals of earlier generations—I am of the conviction that evangelicalism has gone off the rails in its ecclesiology. Perhaps as evangelicals we need to learn from Catholics, precisely because we need to be reminded that doctrinal and ecclesial differences really do have significance.

Hans Boersma
Regent College
Vancouver, British Columbia

I once heard a vice president of Marshall Field's say that "success in merchandising depends upon being the first-choice store for a certain group of shoppers." I think this observation is equally true for institutions that depend on voluntary support: private colleges, private clubs, Christian churches. When there ceases to be a distinction

between Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic, and Anglo-Catholic and between Methodist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Protestants, then those institutional churches will lose the necessary support. When the Episcopal Church stopped worshipping in the "Anglican Way" with the change to a new prayer book, millions of Episcopalians left the church, which is today following Marshall Field's toward nonexistence.

Wheaton College is supported by a particular group of Protestant Christians. It has an influence far beyond that of its inner circle. The same, of course, is true of the Roman Catholic Church. When a member of the faculty of Notre Dame converts to Unitarianism and supports legalized abortion, then Notre Dame, too, will be following Marshall Field's.

Betsey Bobrinskoy
Chicago, Illinois

Alan Jacobs fails to mention Christendom College among the Catholic schools in America that have policies regarding non-Catholics. Christendom requires theology professors to swear allegiance to the Magisterium of the Church during the opening Mass of every school year. It is optional for teachers in other departments, but most of our teachers are Catholic, so they do it anyway. There is no policy against non-Catholics, except that they not teach in the theology department.

John O'Herron
Christendom College
Delaplane, Virginia

Alan Jacobs replies:

I am grateful to all those who responded to my essay; their comments deserve a more detailed response than I can give here.

I thank John O'Herron for his information about Christendom College. The practice there—in which an institution's theologians

have a unique role in safeguarding and representing the institution's tradition—is a common one in Christian colleges and universities, but it is not Wheaton's model.

At Wheaton, not just all faculty but all *employees* sign the Statement of Faith, which reminds us that everyone shares the task (though in varying ways) of conserving and articulating our evangelical tradition. So if we had a Catholic faculty member as a kind of second-class citizen, one whose presence we welcomed but not, strictly speaking, as "one of us," then the biggest change to Wheaton would not be to have a Catholic faculty member but to have two tiers of employees, those fully and those partially on board with our mission. Because I think that much of the strength of Wheaton's institutional conversation comes from its systemic character, my hope is that if we open our doors to Catholic faculty, those doors will be all the way open. But my position just makes all the more serious the issues raised by my other interlocutors.

Matthew Olver claims that "Anglicanism, in its ideal form, maintains a much greater concomitance with the Roman Catholic Church than with any other Protestant body," but of course Anglicans like Paul Zahl would say precisely the opposite and would be no less Anglican for doing so. And since no Anglo magisterium exists to determine what the "ideal form" of Anglicanism is, we Anglicans may (and do) position ourselves at various points along the spectrum. So I would say that it is not "as an Anglican" that Olver is unable to sign Wheaton's Statement of Faith but as a particular *kind* of Anglican. To say that someone is an Anglican is not to say much about their level of agreement or disagreement with Wheaton's theological views. (This is one of the reasons that, though still an Anglican, I am no longer an Episcopalian.)

I hope Paul DeHart will recognize my goodwill when I say that the question of whether Augustine or Luther could teach at Wheaton reminds me of one of the great debates of my childhood: What would happen if Superman fought Godzilla? When you try to bring together, in imagination, powerful beings from different worlds, the sheer speculation is dizzying. The *real* question would not be whether Wheaton would have Luther or Augustine, it is whether Luther or Augustine would recognize Wheaton as being a Christian school *at all*. And can you imagine Aquinas applying for a job at Notre Dame? We see the continuities between our views and theirs, but I am not confident that *they* would see things the same way.

Even though Lewis and Tolkien et al. are much closer to us in time—I am now thinking of the letters of William J. McClain and Charles Kilby Bellinger—some of the same caveats apply. Wheaton's Statement of Faith, while drawing heavily on the central statements of historic Christian orthodoxy, makes provisions that are distinctive to our place and time—that are meant to address certain issues that the leadership of the college (and presumably its employees as well) believe to be especially significant for Christians here and now. For instance, the statement on Scripture would look different if it had been composed in a time when the authority of Scripture was not under significant attack, from within the Church as well as without. If faithful Christians in other times and places—or indeed in our own time and place—would think our statement odd, or incomplete, or too detailed, that does not necessarily reflect poorly on us or them. Different Christian institutions may have legitimately different roles and therefore legitimately different self-definitions.

This is why—*pace* William Reichert—Wheaton is not and has

never been in the business of judging someone's "orthodoxy," whether they are Catholic or Protestant. We have a particular vision that we believe in strongly and wish were more widely shared in Christ's Church, but I don't think anyone at Wheaton has ever questioned the orthodoxy of someone who doesn't share our every point of emphasis and conviction.

Christian orthodoxy, as I understand it, is encapsulated in the great creeds of Christ's Church, especially the Nicene; and since Catholics obviously affirm that teaching, I cannot agree with Gary Hardaway that evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics do not share "core beliefs." Hardaway may also be interested to know that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes this affirmation: "Jesus Christ is true God and true man, in the unity of his divine person; for this reason he is the one and only mediator between God and men." Moreover, Professor Hochschild *did* leave Wheaton graciously, if not altogether cheerfully—he had good friends here and enjoyed his students, who also greatly respected him—and has played no games of any kind, "crafty" or otherwise, as I am sure the administration of Wheaton would be glad to affirm.

Hans Boersma's letter is thoughtful and nuanced, as I would expect from him, and raises questions too deep to be addressed here. I will say, though, that when I claimed that Wheaton people "all *use* the Bible in a similar way," what I had in mind was rhetoric rather than theology *per se*. That is, people of varying traditions tend to quote from their Bibles at the same points in debates and to address the same kinds of issues—and they expect those biblical references to have a certain force that they might not have for other Christians. This rhetoric is our inheritance from modern American evangelicalism and its fundamentalist predecessors, and it does indeed tend to smudge or

even erase differences in the great Reformation traditions, so that, in the interdenominational evangelical context, one struggles to remember that, once upon a time, Calvinists and Wesleyans didn't sound so much alike, even when they were quoting from the same Bible.

Thus my erstwhile colleague Mark Noll, sensing that this lack of differentiation weakens rather than strengthens the evangelical movement, has long been counseling his fellow evangelicals to draw more deeply from the wells of their own particular traditions. If we do so, our conversations are likely to be more pointed and sometimes more difficult, but will surely also be more productive.

And perhaps that practice will make us better able to embrace Catholics as our fellow workers in the vineyards of Christian higher education. If, on the other hand, we can embrace Catholics as fellow workers only because we (and they) have lost our awareness of what distinguishes these various traditions, then ours will be a hollow victory indeed, and a largely false "oneness."

The question for Wheaton is simply whether its current hiring policies help or hinder its own mission to serve Christ and his Kingdom. I have argued that we may well have reached the point where the exclusion of Catholics hinders us; but it is both inaccurate and uncharitable to attribute that exclusion (as Charles Kilby Bellinger does) merely to "small-mindedness" and "deep-seated anti-Catholic prejudices." Hans Boersma's letter gives an indication of the real complexities at issue here. And in response to Betsey Brobinskoy: While I do not want Wheaton to go the way of Marshall Field's or the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago—Lord preserve us!—I also think we have to follow the Lord's call upon us without counting the cost. He has not promised any of us success in all our endeavors.

Finally, twenty-five years ago, as a new Christian and a graduate student in English at the University of Virginia, I awoke to find myself lost in a dark wood and was helped to escape Error by a long correspondence with one Thomas Howard, then of Gordon College. He introduced me to many of the books and thinkers that he mentions in his letter—and to Peter Kreeft, whose epistolary patience with me was similarly Christlike—and while I have remained (in the words of my beloved fellow Anglican Sir Thomas Browne) “of that Reformed new-cast Religion, wherein I dislike nothing but the Name,” the Catholic traditions that Tom showed me then have continued to sustain me spiritually and, I think, to give far greater depth and resonance to my teaching than I would ever have achieved otherwise. He also, in effect, got me my job at Wheaton. So to those who think that my tolerance of papistical nonsense and sophistry has far exceeded the bounds appropriate to a good evangelical and professor at Wheaton College, I say: Blame Tom Howard.

Warding Off Liberalism

Reading Joseph Pearce’s review (“The Watch and Ward Society,” April) of my book, *Out of Due Time*, I do not know whether to laugh or to cry. It must bring a smile to the lips of those who know me (and to my superiors) for me to be called a man of “liberal prejudices,” a person in “seeming sympathy toward Tyrrell’s point of view,” and so on. That certainly has not been my reputation. In fact, my interpretation of Wilfrid Ward does not differ (as Pearce should know) from that of Ward’s daughter Maisie (something I was much criticized for), who describes her father as an intelligent conservative caught between intransigent conservatives (whom the eminent historian and Newman scholar

Sheridan Gilley calls the “hyper-orthodox”) and those much more radical theologically.

Though one would never know it from his comments, my book was the result of an enormous amount of primary and secondary research and of archival work in England and Scotland. (One of my readers called it “research rapture.”) I can confidently say that I know what I am talking about. I would not say that of Pearce. He assumes all sorts of things about me and my opinions that are false and that he should know are false if he actually took the time to read what I have said and if he knew the material. He has done a grave disservice to the readers of this journal and a grave injustice to me personally. There is a place for literary journalism and a place for scholarship. What Pearce does is not scholarship.

Dom Paschal Scotti
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Joseph Pearce replies:

Needless to say, I have nothing personal against Dom Paschal Scotti. How can I have? I do not know him. Unlike his superiors, I have no inkling of his reputation, liberal or otherwise. I was, in fact, not judging him at all; I was judging his book. I complained that his book was plagued by “intellectual impressionism,” namely its failure to provide definitions and its spurning of clear meaning. Scotti’s letter suffers from the same impressionism. It gives the vague impression that I have done him an injustice because I do not know him as well as those who know him, but it fails to engage a solitary criticism that I made of his book. He doesn’t address my criticism of his use of words such as *extreme* and *dogmatic* or *papal* and *rigid* as pejorative synonyms. He doesn’t explain why he never refers to Tyrrell as a heretic but suggests that the notorious excommunicated Jesuit was merely being “adventurous” in his modernism. Since he fails to critique

my critique, there is no point of engagement to which I can respond. It is hard to argue with an impression. It is even harder to grapple with the fog.

Whose Philosophy? Which Rationality?

R.R. Reno is right about greater emphasis on truth and objectivity in analytic philosophy as compared with most continental philosophy (“Theology’s Continental Captivity,” April). Analytic philosophers make important contributions to theodicy, moral theology, and other areas. But Reno passes over Hegel, whom Karl Barth called the “Protestant Aquinas,” too lightly. Yes, Hegel in the *Phenomenology* interprets the vocation of the philosopher to raise the “picture-thinking” of the Christian religion to a conceptual level, and he does not exactly see philosophy as the “handmaid” of theology. However, the greater part of his work is concerned with philosophical speculation on the Christian dogmas. In the *Phenomenology* itself, which he describes at the end as the “Golgotha” of Spirit, he engages in deep reflections on the nature of faith, in contrast to the dialectics of the Enlightenment, and on the nature of original sin, the atonement, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Redemption, mutual forgiveness, and the emergence of the Spirit in the Christian community.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, he chides the theologians for giving lip service to the idea of Divine Providence while avoiding the hard work of showing how it has worked out in world history. He describes his *Science of Logic* as an investigation of the life of God before the creation of the world, and in his *Philosophy of Nature* he analyzes nature as an objectification of divine life. In his *Philosophy of Right*, he portrays the free modern state as the emergence of a political community

based on (Protestant) Christian reconciliation of secularity and religion. And in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, he includes a separate treatise analyzing the "ontological" proof for the existence of God.

One of my doctoral students, Patricia Calton, has published *Hegel's Metaphysics of God*, which expands on Hegel's extraordinary trinitarian theology. Hans Küng's *The Incarnation of God* is an extensive treatment of Hegel's treatment of Christology. Hegel, as is well known, was not particularly enamored of Catholicism. But he compares Catholic theologians favorably with Protestant theologians for their commitment to philosophical reflection on theological truths, following in the footsteps of the patristic writers. The idea of philosophy as a "handmaiden" to theology as "queen" is not *entirely* overturned in Hegel. Rather, the truths of Christianity are a natural stepping-stone to philosophical speculation—and are, in a sense, foundational in Hegel's approach.

Howard P. Kainz
Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

After reading R.R. Reno's comments about my book *Foundations of Systematic Theology* and how it exemplifies a "continental captivity" neglectful of analytical philosophy, I feel a kinship with Wittgenstein's comment "My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one." For Reno examines not the metaphysical and phenomenological arguments I adduce in defense of the Christian faith but the analytical ones I fail to offer.

Nonetheless, Reno's point is undeniable: Analytical philosophy is often overlooked by contemporary theology. And he usefully indicates those areas, particularly regarding notions of truth and objectivity, in which this method has something important to

contribute. He is right, then, that my appeal to standards of rationality that in some measure transcend historical contexts should have made room for analytical philosophy alongside other modes of reasoning.

But one crucial argument of *Foundations* concerns the need for metaphysics in theology, a need rooted in the most basic affirmations of Catholic faith and thought. And it is precisely here that the theologian pauses before analytical method. For, one asks, is this philosophy too heavily freighted with weaknesses to be profoundly useful for theological reflection? Fergus Kerr, himself sympathetic to the analytical approach, has conceded that language about being "remains baffling" to most thinkers in this school. This candid admission should raise a warning flag.

For metaphysics in general, and a philosophy of being in particular, has been closely allied to Catholic theology for substantial reasons: (1) metaphysics grounds the predication of names to God (utilizing the analogy of being); (2) it opens up the participationist structure of reality (the ascent to God by way of the intelligibility of the existing real); (3) it warrants the distinction between *esse* and essence, thereby allowing God to be understood as the intensive act of existing without potentiality (supporting the Church's understanding of God as the Unchanging One of Absolute Love); and (4) it offers an anthropology that establishes an eidetically discernable nature or form (thereby explaining how meaning and truth are not swallowed up in the maw of sociocultural contingency).

Given these reasons, it is unsurprising that in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998) John Paul II insisted that a theology that shuns metaphysics is "radically unsuited" for mediating Revelation and argued that if theology is to function properly, the *intellectus fidei* needs the contributions of a philosophy of being. But it is just this metaphysical dimension,

this philosophy of being, that goes wanting in analytical method.

While I argue in *Foundations* that continental thought may be appropriated by theology in a qualified manner (surely the contributions of Heidegger, Gadamer, and even Derrida cannot be ignored), one can hardly claim that theology is in "captivity" to it. Continental thought is attractive to theologians because it recognizes the importance of philosophy's large-scale, sapiential task: to elaborate a comprehensive vision of humanity and the world—the discipline's ancient and traditional goal. But theology can never be captive to any mode of reasoning, whatever its provenance, precisely because Christian thought has the obligation to judge and to sift every philosophy, as the entire Spoils-from-Egypt tradition testifies. Aquinas, for example, insists that theologians must subject philosophy to the service of faith, thereby changing water into wine. Cardinal Newman adds that the Church is a vast treasure-house, purifying ideas of their errors, then stamping them with a deep impress of the master's image.

Adducing analytical thought's strengths, as Professor Reno does, is surely legitimate. But this method's significant weaknesses must also be forthrightly acknowledged. If analytical philosophy is to make some long-lasting contribution to theological reflection, then, I submit, it must be able to countenance not only the logic of argumentation and the clarification of concepts, it must be able, as well, to appropriate critically the contributions of continental thought and to consider seriously the larger questions inherent in a philosophy of being.

Rev. Thomas G. Guarino
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey

R.R. Reno replies:

Professor Kainz is right to point out that Hegel gives striking meta-

physical form to Christian dogma. Yet we need to look at more than the content of his philosophy. The trajectory or momentum of Hegel's thought is also very important. His genius was to reinterpret Christian doctrine as a reality-creating pattern rather than as a list of beliefs to which one must give assent. In this way, Hegel preserved the central role of Christianity as a cultural form or idea while he shifted focus away from the increasingly contested question of the truth of classical doctrine.

There are few card-carrying Hegelians these days, but nearly all Western intellectuals think in a broadly Hegelian way. If students are troubled about contradictions in the Bible, the professor lectures about the historical process of oral traditions and their diverse transitions into literary form. If we founder on the claim that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, we can turn to a book on the incarnational vision of Christianity. In each instance, just as Kainz says, the substance of our faith becomes a stepping-stone toward what really matters—an intellectual grasp of the reality-creating cultural patterns that give shape to our lives.

Knowing ourselves as formed by dynamics of social, historical, and psychological development is the dominant goal of modern education (it's called critical thinking), and Hegel is its magisterial theoretician. So, by all means, study him but remember that classical Christian theology moves in a very different direction—knowing that a first-century Palestinian Jew, crucified in Jerusalem and raised on the third day, is the endpoint of the Christian search for truth. Receiving the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist is as close as we can get to the source and ground of all reality. Everything else that we might do with our minds, including the rare and unreliable impulse toward speculative thought, is but a stepping-stone.

If Kainz can make Hegel move toward the Eucharist rather than the so-called sacramental worldview, or toward Christ rather than the concept of incarnation, then my hat is off to him. The same is true for the children and grandchildren of Hegel. I'm sure that virtuosos of faith can provide telling critiques and offer striking reformulations, but in general most theologians who invest heavily in continental philosophy are swept along from Christ crucified and risen to the Idea of Christianity. Exhibit A: Karl Rahner.

I count Tom Guarino a friend, and I hope my essay conveyed my deep appreciation for his efforts to infuse contemporary theology with a commitment to truth. But we do disagree about philosophy. Guarino emphasizes "philosophy's large-scale, sapiential task." He implies that continental philosophy is true to this task, while analytic philosophy is mere expertise in logic and formal clarification of concepts. I agree about the core, sapiential task of philosophy, but I find myself drawing a very different conclusion.

Put bluntly, we are living in a time of cultural revolution. From Socrates to the modern era, the great sapiential task was to seek, cherish, and obey truth. Now, much of modern humanistic study wants to tell us that seeking truth amounts to self-deception, that to pretend to cherish truth is a mask for exercising power, and that obeying truth is nothing more than submission to the disguised will of another. This sentiment is the late, autumnal fruit of a continental tradition in philosophy that has consistently positioned itself in the Big Picture approach to the difficult problems of modern life.

The contrast to analytic philosophy is evident. Guarino may think analytic philosophy technical, formal, and small-minded. I think he is wrong. Thomas Nagel's essays are precise, but they are not obscure. Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*

is severely reasoned, but it is most definitely not narrow in conception or consequence. But even if he perseveres in his particular judgments, Guarino must allow that, overall, analytic philosophy has sustained precisely that which the supposedly metaphysical tradition of Hegel and Heidegger and beyond now encourages us to reject—a desire for, love of, and obedience to truth. Analytic philosophy may have many flaws, but it does not have a weakness for the relativism and subjectivism so prevalent today. Thus, at the deepest level, analytic philosophy is presently the most reliable steward of the sapiential task of philosophy.

As a Catholic theologian, I feel a special burden and obligation. By my reading, many academic theologians encourage and contribute to the present cultural revolution. Functioning as a chaplaincy to an elite culture of unbelief, modern theology has many strategies for evading the question of the truth of Christ, strategies that work very easily and all too suspiciously in tandem with continental philosophy. The Hegelian move from the "picture thinking" of the Bible to the higher realms of concepts is just one example. There are many variations on this theme, and we theologians love to traffic in meaning and symbols and concepts while dismissing ordinary questions of truth as "fundamentalist" or "literalist" or "naïve." Now, under the supposed sapiential guidance of postmodern philosophers, we can take a more direct route by decrying dogma as oppression and become patrons of inclusive faith: "True faith is openness to the Other."

In this situation, I think it is imperative that doctrinally serious Catholic theology break off its current affair with postmodern, continental thought and turn to analytic philosophy in order to restore a robust *theological* commitment to truth.

The Albanian Persecution

In "Broken Promises" (April), Stephen Schwartz writes eloquently about the bloody persecution that Albania's Catholics endured under that nation's Communist dictatorship. One regrets that Schwartz chose to limit his eloquence to events past and his Christian solidarity to Roman Catholics.

Schwartz writes not one word about the perilous situation that Albania's Orthodox Christian minority faces today from Albania's Muslim majority—never mind a word about the Orthodox blood that was shed by Albania's Communists. By no means were Roman Catholics the only martyrs and confessors for Jesus Christ in Red Albania.

In passing, Schwartz refers to "the liberation of Kosovo in 1999." He appears to be unaware that one of the things Kosovo was "liberated" from was Christianity. In testimony before the U.S. Congressional Task Force for Human Rights on March 15, His Grace Teodosije, auxiliary bishop of Lipljan and vice-chairman for Kosovo and Metohija of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, spoke of the plight of the 200,000 Serbian Christians who have fled their homes in the face of Kosovar Albanian violence and of the dismal prospects of the remaining Kosovar Serbs for anything resembling a normal life.

"Our children are growing up in constant fear and uncertainty because the society being built around is not a society where all citizens are equal, but a society that is being tailored exclusively to meet the needs of the majority Albanian community, in which Serbs and other non-Albanians live as more or less welcome guests and strangers," Bishop Teodosije testified.

"Unfortunately, this sort of relationship takes us right back to the organization of society in Kosovo which led to armed conflict and the

intervention of the NATO forces. Did U.S. soldiers come to Kosovo in order to make it possible for one form of repression to be replaced with another? They certainly did not but, unfortunately, that is the reality that exists not only in our eyes, but also in the eyes of many objective international observers," Bishop Teodosije said.

His Grace also provided documentation, yet again, of the systematic "torching and destruction of 150 holy shrines (in Kosovo and Metohija), several dating back to the Middle Ages, of irreplaceable value," which fact has been corroborated by UNESCO, as well as "the eradication of cemeteries where almost all crosses have been obliterated."

The restoration of "Albanian Catholic culture" is indeed a cause worth fostering. But this restoration will never happen in Albania or elsewhere in the region unless Christians in the West unite to defend equal human rights for Albanian Christians and Kosovar Christians alike.

Here is a God-sent opportunity for the Holy See to put some teeth into its talk about Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement.

Michael Redmond
Princeton, New Jersey

Stephen Schwartz replies:

I visit all the Albanian lands frequently and speak and read Serbian and Albanian. The claim that Orthodox Christians in Albania suffer any discrimination of any kind at the present time is not only a total invention, it is so novel I have never encountered it before. Orthodox Christians and people of Orthodox heritage—whether Albanian, Greek, or Vlach (a Romanian-speaking minority)—not only enjoy rights in Albania that Albanian and Vlach minorities do not possess in Orthodox Greece, they are highly placed in the Albanian state and media. If there is any controversy involving Orthodox Christians in Albania, it has to do

with the scandalous fact that the head of the Albanian Orthodox Church, Anastasios Yannoulatos, is an ethnic Greek and citizen of Greece, rather than an Albanian.

While the Albanian Communist regime repressed the Orthodox Church, ethnic Greeks and Vlachs of Orthodox background were favored cadres in the system of dictator Enver Hoxha. Many of them were former members of the so-called Democratic Army of Greece, a Communist terror force, which retreated into Albania.

The claim that Kosovo was "liberated from Christianity" is a despicable distortion. The Albanian Catholic Church maintains its houses of worship in every major Kosovo town. I visit them about twice a year. The Serbian Orthodox Church is protected by NATO troops. While numerous Serbs fled Kosovo after their brutal terror over Kosovar Albanians ended, the figure of 200,000 is exaggerated; Serbia did not and does not have the capacity to absorb 200,000 Serbian refugees from Kosovo.

It is undeniable that some Serbian Orthodox churches have been vandalized or demolished in Kosovo. It is also undeniable that most of those that were damaged were established in the period of Serbian imperialist rule beginning in 1912, with such construction expanded after 1987, to symbolize Serb domination of the province. Similarly, in the 1920s, with the independence of Poland from tsarist rule, the enormous and hideously ugly St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral that had been erected in Warsaw to represent Russian power over the Poles was leveled. I oppose double standards on these matters. The Albanians were, are, and will be the overwhelming majority in Kosovo, and they will soon be its masters. There is no reason they should be compelled to preserve or protect structures intended not for legitimate

worship but as a form of cultural aggression.

The old Orthodox monasteries and churches of Kosovo, many of which were originally built by Macedonians, Bulgarians, and Vlachs, and which were then seized and taken over by Serbs, deserve to be and will be preserved, protected, and, where damaged, restored. The figure of 150 Serbian "shrines" torched and destroyed in Kosovo is misleading and exaggerated; indeed, the manipulation employed in advancing this argument is obvious in the phrasing of Bishop Teodosije, who said only that "several" of the sites were ancient. At the same time, some 250 Muslim mosques were destroyed in Kosovo in the 1998-1999 period by Serbian terrorists. The latter acts have been documented without rhetorical excess, which is unnecessary since the vandalism speaks for itself.

It is seldom mentioned that the clerics of the Serbian Orthodox hierarchy who loudly protest their situation in Kosovo maintain an abusive usurpation of the properties of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of Montenegro and Macedonia. The rights of the latter are completely denied. Now that Montenegro has declared its independence, the Montenegrin Orthodox should attain restoration of control over their churches. Albanian Catholics and Muslims, who are a substantial minority in Montenegro, support this position, as they also do regarding the Macedonian Orthodox Christians.

It is even less often mentioned that Serbian clerics from Kosovo and its neighboring regions, who continually come to the United States to bewail their situation, such as Bishops Artemije Radosavljevic and Amfilohije Radovic, are fanatical advocates for one of the worst Jew-baiters in twentieth-century history, the Serbian Orthodox cleric Nikolai Velimirovic. Men like Artemije and Amfilohije (both of whom I know personally) have proved extremely

adroit at hiding their real views when they deal with Westerners. I myself was fooled more than once by Artemije.

The Holy See should be more concerned with justice for the memories of the martyred Croatian, Bosnian, Albanian, and other Catholics slain by Slobodan Milosevic's terrorists, the latter blessed in their murderous activities by clerics like Amfilohije, than with an attempt to create a Catholic-Orthodox intrigue to defame Albanians, whether Muslim or otherwise.

War and Justice

George Weigel's reasoned exposition of the just war tradition in support of our war in Iraq was superb ("Iraq: Then & Now," April). He asks, "Who would have imagined, fifty years ago, that much of American liberalism, rather than making the moral and political case for deposing a genocidal maniac, would find itself in de facto alliance with the status quo forces in world politics?" The basic human rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are universal. Mortar and brick cannot be equated to the infinite value of innocent human life. For Christians, this is articulated as "love your neighbor as yourself." Which raises the question, If Americans or Europeans suffered like the people of Iraq under Saddam Hussein, would they not hope and pray for liberation? If so, then a component of liberalism's opposition to the war in Iraq is elitism and bigotry, in effect saying, "The Iraqi people are fundamentally inferior to the well-educated, white sophisticates of the West."

These comments are not meant to deny that, for some, opposition to the war is sincere, but only to state that, for many, the opposition is, to say the least, adulterated.

If the war in Iraq is not justified, then if the Eiffel Tower or the Bundestag or St. Peter's Basilica is hit by a

terrorist attack, turned to rubble, and 100,000 are people killed, why should the United States or Britain respond? Perhaps they will not.

Ronald G. Connolly
Walnut Creek, California

The remarks of George Weigel in the recent issue suggesting that Pope John Paul II was circumspect, if not implicitly supportive, concerning our war in Iraq are puzzling, to say the very least. Indeed, they are belied by the following words of then Cardinal Ratzinger: "The pope expressed his thought with great clarity, not only as his individual thought but as the thought of a man who is knowledgeable in the highest functions of the Catholic Church. ... The Holy Father's judgment is also convincing from a rational point of view: There was not sufficient reason to unleash a war in Iraq."

Joseph C. Heim
California University
of Pennsylvania
California, Pennsylvania

On the question of whether or not the UN possesses sovereign authority, I think George Weigel makes good arguments and I agree with him. Authority for making war has not been remanded to the UN. The corruption at the UN, while well documented, seems irrelevant to the main argument. The issue that troubles me is one that Weigel does not take up; in fact, I have not seen any commentators take it up. What has happened to Article I, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution? The power to declare war in our constitutional system rests with Congress. We now have a president declaring that he is exercising his war powers in various matters, but constitutionally speaking we are not in a state of war. So my problem is not that we went to war without a UN resolution. It is that we went to war without having a declaration of war as our Constitution requires, as we did in Vietnam,

Kuwait, and Afghanistan. Korea was officially a UN operation.

Weigel's untold stories at the end of the article puzzle me as well. Does he really consider Iraq the "regime with the greatest democratic legitimacy in the modern history of the Middle East"? I would have thought that Israel or Turkey would lay claim to that title in the minds of most. Regarding recent positive developments in Libya and Lebanon, it does appear that the U.S. invasion of Iraq might have played a role. The invasion of Iraq might also have played a role in the aggressive approach Iran and North Korea have recently taken on acquiring nuclear weapons. Perhaps the war in Iraq also played a role in the decisive victory by Hamas in the most recent Palestinian elections.

John Neville
Halifax, Nova Scotia

I thought George Weigel's article "Iraq: Then & Now" did a superb job of addressing the highly important question of the justness of Bush's preemption doctrine. And how right he is as to the Europeans' cartoonish image of America. I well remember being in Vienna in the months leading up to the Iraq invasion and simply laughing out loud at the marchers pouring through the city center with their signs urgently denouncing Bush's "blood for oil." I thought, "They really don't understand America."

That said, while having no doubts as to Bush's passing of the initial just-cause question, I do begin to wonder if he equally passed the prudential "ought we then go to war" question—that must surely also be part of the moral equation. Bush supporter though I am and remain, do we have perhaps evidence of a certain arrogance that has led him, in spite of his inexperience in world politics, to prefer his own hunches over the expertise of State Department professionals? Do we have evidence of this way back in 2001, when, returning from

Camp David, he announced his intention to pursue a "crusade... against terrorism," thus betraying (a) a total insensitivity to the world situation (specifically, the Muslim world's perception) and (b) a complete isolation from any State Department handlers who could have reined in this sort of remark? Is the mess-up we have today of any proper follow-up in Iraq simply an extension of this one remark, and the realities behind it?

Paul Miller
Bellevue, Washington

I think George Weigel's recent article "Iraq: Then & Now" presented some of the best antiwar arguments I've heard in a long time. To start, he destroys the legitimate moral and legal authority of the UN by exposing the corruption in the Oil for Food program and then later insists the resolutions passed by this corrupt entity are somehow legally and morally binding on Saddam Hussein. This is the same UN whose resolutions the U.S. routinely ignores when contrary to its interests.

In the army, I learned to make decisions that would at least mitigate the effects of bad intelligence. Yet this seems to be a lesson lost on the Bush administration. Rather than bombing Saddam's supposed terrorist training camps (like Reagan did with Libya), we invaded. Rather than bombing the supposed WMD facilities, we invaded. Instead of merely eliminating the threat of WMDs (if it existed), we've now assumed responsibility for a nation on the brink of civil war. With the legitimacy of our cause suspect, our efforts to bring peace to the region have become futile. I am reminded of what Pope John Paul II said prior to the war, "I will simply add today, faced with the constant degeneration of the crisis in the Middle East, that the solution will never be imposed by recourse to terrorism or armed conflict, as if military victories could be the solution." It seems

he understood the consequences of war better than our president.

Nathan Crawford
Palatine, Illinois

George Weigel replies:

I thank all of those who took the trouble to write in response to "Iraq: Then & Now." Ronald Connolly's letter raises an interesting point: Did Pope John Paul II get it right when, at the United Nations in 1995, he proposed that the universal quest for freedom he discerned on the far side of the communist crack-up was an expression of moral truths hardwired into a universal human nature? If John Paul did in fact get it right, as I believe he did, then President Bush's second inaugural address also got it right in identifying similar, universal aspirations. Now, to be sure, the late pope acknowledged in that same UN address that the political structure of freedom would take different forms in different cultures, and it remains to be seen how those forms will evolve—if they are given the chance to evolve—in the Arab Islamic world. Still, those who think that John Paul II and George W. Bush had utterly different views of the world, and of the moral responsibilities of statecraft, have to conjure with John Paul's 1995 UN address, which is the most cogent papal statement on the universality of human rights in the Catholic human-rights tradition.

This brings me, if by a circuitous path, to Joseph Heim's letter. I certainly didn't suggest that the late pope was "circumspect" about, "if not implicitly supportive" of, U.S. military action in Iraq in March 2003, and a plain reading of my article will not support Heim's suggestion. What I did want to underscore (in an article that was, after all, dedicated to a just-war analysis of the Iraq War) was that John Paul II, for all his manifest opposition to the use of military force in March 2003, never used the word *unjust* to describe what subsequently unfolded. Why? In part, I

expect, because he did not wish to put a burden of conscience on Catholic members of the coalition armed forces; in part, I expect, because he agreed with the teaching of the catechism he had promulgated, that the final responsibility for making a moral assessment of the situation through the prism of just-war thinking lay with the relevant public authorities. Suffice it to say that, in the year and a half of conversations we shared after the beginning of the Iraq War, John Paul II, who was quite aware of what I had been writing about just-war thinking in the months and years after September 11, never suggested to me that I had somehow misrepresented his views on Iraq, or that my views were the result of a distorted understanding of the Catholic tradition. There is more to be said on all this, but now is not the time, nor this the forum, to say it.

John Neville raises the interesting question of the legal authority for the just war and how a revised just-war tradition, operating as a framework for collaborative moral reflection in the United States, would treat the tangled question of congressional and presidential war powers. As a matter of fact, the Congress did vote to authorize the use of American armed forces to enforce the dozen or more UN resolutions being defied by the Saddam Hussein regime—although some members of Congress (remember Senator Kerry?) seemed later to regret what they had done. I am not a constitutional lawyer, so I do not know whether the kind of congressional resolutions used as the legal authority for U.S. action in

Afghanistan and Iraq met a strict test of constitutional propriety. What does seem clear, from a just-war point of view, is that an American president had better see to it that he has the people and their duly elected representatives behind him in situations like Afghanistan and Iraq—and that he bend every effort of public diplomacy to maintain that support (an issue I addressed in my article).

Perhaps I'm geographically challenged, but—and here I refer to Neville's comments about political legitimacy—I don't instinctively think of Turkey as part of the Middle East; neither, evidently, do those Turks who badly want to be part of the European Union. I surely agree with Neville that both the Turkish and Israeli governments enjoy the democratic legitimacy of having been elected by free and fair suffrage; the context of my article should have clarified any confusions of formulation, such that my point—that the present Iraqi government enjoys a democratic legitimacy hitherto unknown in the Arab Islamic world—was clear enough. North Korea and Iran were, of course, seeking nuclear weapons for decades before the Iraq War (and in the case of the Koreans, alas, succeeding in getting them). As for the oxymoronically named Palestinian Authority and its strange, recent election, I don't know for sure why Hamas won, but I expect it has at least something to do with the Olympic-class corruption and incompetence of the PLO, which had run Palestine for years as the world's biggest and seediest welfare client.

Paul Miller usefully raises the question of prudence in just-war thinking, which of course looms large in this instance, as in all others. I don't agree, though, that President Bush's vocabulary in 2001 had much to do with the mistakes the administration has made in Iraq since major combat ended (or, perhaps I should say, ended for the first time). The problem, as I obliquely suggested in the article, is that Americans don't do empire very well—and if we are to continue to play the role of security-enforcer-of-last-resort in these first decades of the twenty-first century, we had better start learning quickly. That being said, and meant, it is also true that very few great powers have had to deal with circumstances as difficult as those the United States has faced in Iraq, which from the point of view of jihadist Muslims like the late, unlamented Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is the current central front of a world war against the West.

Nathan Crawford suggests it's all-or-nothing with the UN, and America uses the UN as its interests dictate. That is likely true, but if so, it is also true of the other 190 UN member states. And the sooner that is understood, the better for just-war reasoning, which is often befuddled these days by the unexamined assumption that the UN is a *de facto* world government that displays the attributes of legitimate sovereign authority in ways that satisfy the *ius ad bellum*'s first criterion: legitimate authority. That is a difficult, if not impossible, case to make—without, that is, turning classic just-war thinking into a form of international political correctness.

OPINION

The Code Breakers

Alan Jacobs

A few years ago, I wrote an essay in praise of the Harry Potter books that yielded some interesting responses. One man, knowing that I am a Christian, wrote in some astonishment: Did I not see that the books symbolically describe an alchemy-based paganism, a model of magical power deeply hostile to Christianity? The key, he said, was to be found primarily in the names of the main characters, which referred to different stages of the alchemists' wisdom, and in animals like the phoenix Fawkes—the phoenix being a major symbol, for the alchemists, of transformation.

I did not find these arguments strong at the time, and I grew more dubious a few weeks later when I received a letter from another Potter scholar who claimed that the books did indeed have a hidden meaning but a specifically Christian one. According to this interpreter, my first correspondent was right in thinking that the phoenix was deeply significant but wrong about what it signified: Far from being anti-Christian, the phoenix is a symbol of the Resurrection of Jesus, and the whole Harry Potter series is a covert retelling of the Christian narrative.

My two correspondents may have come to opposite conclusions, but on a deeper level they were confederates: fellow believers in the Gospel of the Hidden Meaning. And they have plenty of company. The world is full, it sometimes seems, of people who think that what writers do is encode secret messages, and what readers, therefore, should do is decipher them.

For example, Michael Drosnin's *Bible Code* volumes of 1997 and 2002 suggest that by examining sequences of letters—every sixteenth letter, say—in the text of Scripture, we can discover prophecies of contemporary events. (This idea is actually quite old; it was practiced, for instance, in thirteenth-century Spain by Rabbi Bachya ben Asher.) Among much else, Drosnin discovered that the Bible Code prophesied the attacks of September 11, 2001—which would, of course, have been much more impressive if he had discovered it before the bombings rather than after.

Meanwhile, in 2005 Claire Asquith published *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare*, a book arguing at great length that

Shakespeare's plays consist of a series of coded messages to English Catholics expressing the playwright's devotion to their faith and their cause. Much the same argument had been made a year earlier by Richard Wilson in his book *Secret Shakespeare*—though, as the scholar Anne Barton recently remarked in the *New York Review of Books*, Asquith and Wilson rarely agree about how any particular passage or place or character in the play actually illustrates Shakespeare's Catholicism. Wilson thinks Belmont, the home of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, portrays the country house of an English Catholic family; but Asquith thinks Portia is an image of the very Protestant Queen Elizabeth. It turns out that the secret meaning of Portia is as tough to figure out as the secret meaning of Fawkes the phoenix.

And then, of course, there is *The Da Vinci Code*, which has encryption and decryption as its *raison d'être*. It's hard not to suspect that, as a child, Dan Brown found a secret decoder ring in his breakfast cereal and never really got over it. Nearly every name in the book is an anagram of some other name, and encryption comes so naturally to Brown's characters that when one of them is dying from a gunshot wound, he still has the resourcefulness to make anagrams of the messages he needs to write with an invisible-ink pen—no doubt another cereal toy from Brown's childhood—and even in his own blood. It's easy to get into the spirit of all this: Sony Pictures uses the invisible-ink message to name its website for the movie (sodarktheconofman.com), and Justice Peter Smith, the British judge who recently determined that Brown had not plagiarized other books, implanted a comical "Smithy code" into the text of his own ruling—using not Brown's preferred method of the anagram but rather a series of apparently accidental italic letters (more like *The Bible Code*).

What is the appeal of this kind of thing? Why is it so recurrently popular? There's a wonderful passage in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* where one of the main characters, Pierre Bezukhov, discovers that if you assign a number to each letter of the alphabet, the words *L'Empereur Napoleon* add up to 666—the number of the Antichrist. Then Pierre, because he imagines himself as Napoleon's great antagonist, starts trying to write his own name in such a way that it also adds up to 666 and finds that he cannot, even after he changes the spelling in several different ways. But finally, he decides not only to alter his name's spelling but also to indicate his nationality, and finally to abandon correct French usage: "L'russe Besuhof," astonishingly, yields 666. "This discovery excited him," Tolstoy notes with the straightest of faces. "How, or by what means, he was connected with the great event foretold in the Apocalypse he did not know, but he did not doubt the connection for a moment."

Well, there's part of the answer: the sense of suddenly being plugged into a vast world-historical event, into pure meaning, remains enormously appealing—especially when it's a meaning others cannot see. *The Da Vinci Code*, of course, is fiction (especially the parts Dan Brown claims to be fact), while the Asquith and Wilson books are based on extensive research and depend on significant historical knowledge. Even so, the differences are less significant than one would think. All such books are based on pure supposal: Let's suppose that Shakespeare was a crypto-Catholic who hid Catholic messages in his plays, or that the authors of the Bible hid secret messages within the text, or whatever.

If you begin by supposing something to be true that there is simply no reason even to suspect is true and then look for any evidence that might be construed as supportive of that supposal while resolutely ignoring any evidence that might be construed as refuting that supposal—well, then, you're quite likely to find yourself in the position of Pierre Bezukhov, amazed by how a scarily intricate story holds together.

Mathematicians—striving, often unsuccessfully, to remain calm-voiced and to soothe the frenzied thumping of their temples—reply that an elementary knowledge of probability will reveal that such correspondences aren't surprising at all. Logicians reply that not only have these code breakers cooked the books by manipulating the data but they have also overlooked dozens or hundreds of far more likely correspondences. Skilled literary critics reply that if you define a character or a thing or an event in a story vaguely enough, it can become a symbol of almost anything. (Thus the old story of the high school English teacher who argued that Robert Frost's poem "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" is about Santa Claus. Who else is in the snow-covered woods, at night, with promises to keep and miles to go before he sleeps?)

But it's easy, when thrilled by the prospect of making a discovery, to see that which has been hidden to all or at least to most, to become part of what C.S. Lewis called an Inner Ring—the Ring whose goose-bumps-inducing catchphrase is always "We few"—to forget that some supposals are better than others. That Shakespeare was a secret Catholic is indeed plausible; that Shakespeare wrote plays to send secret messages to his fellow Catholics is far less so. But such distinctions are easily elided. Indeed, code breakers have an interest in eliding them and in rushing quickly past inconveniently slippery information.

For instance, Father Andreas Kramarz, writing recently in the *National Catholic Register* (largely about Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel's book *The Hidden Existence of William Shakespeare: Poet*

and Rebel in the Catholic Underground), is careful throughout most of his article to maintain the proper reserve, with all the appropriate ifs and may-haves and could-haves, but he never pauses to consider any alternative to the Great Supposal of the poet's Catholicism. Nor are the putative solid facts of the case as solid as Fr. Kramarz—relying, I imagine, on Hammerschmidt-Hummel—believes.

Take this straightforward sentence: "For seven years, William was taught at the Latin school by Simon Hunt, a Catholic." But the only available records say that Simon Hunt was the schoolmaster in Stratford for just four years, leaving when young Will Shakespeare was eleven. Moreover, while it seems very likely that Shakespeare attended this school, we cannot be sure of even that, for no school records have survived. And there was a different Simon Hunt who died in Stratford around 1598; if he had lived there for any length of time, he could have been Will's teacher, not Simon Hunt the known Catholic. When that Simon Hunt left Stratford in 1578, he went to the great English Catholic college at Douai in France, where he studied for the priesthood, receiving ordination and joining the Society of Jesus three years later.

To some scholars, this renders full of import the mention of Rheims in *The Taming of the Shrew*. But Gremio only says that Lucentio "hath been long studying at Rheims" and is "cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages." If that is sufficient, as some think, to suggest that Shakespeare studied there himself, what are we to make of the fact that Hamlet is a student at Wittenberg? Does that mean Shakespeare was a Lutheran?

This ceaseless over-reading of trivia makes scholars look like cranks and often has the effect of making legitimate evidence seem guilty by association. For there are good reasons, biographical and even textual, to suspect that Shakespeare was a Catholic. His father almost certainly was a committed Catholic; several other members of his family definitely affirmed the Old Faith; he had many personal associations with Catholic families. And then there is the powerful presence of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, the father of the young prince and student at Luther's Wittenberg, who returns to tell his son that he is "Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, / And for the day confin'd to fast in fires, / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purg'd away"—as straightforwardly Catholic a portrait of Purgatory as one could hope for. No wonder Hamlet says to his school friend, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." The "your" is telling.

Yet even so, Shakespeare's King John articulates the church-state disputes of the thirteenth century in curiously anachronistic and distinctively Anglican terms,

such that some characters anticipate the antipapal arguments common in the time of Henry VIII and his children. (An English Jesuit named William Sankey, working at the English Catholic college at Valladolid, Spain, in the 1640s, censored Shakespeare's plays for his students and went through *King John* with a particularly heavy pen. There is no evidence that he discerned any pro-Catholic messages in the other plays.)

More to the point, even if it could be established that Shakespeare was a Catholic, that task is trivial in comparison with the challenge of showing that his plays encode his Catholic concerns. Stephen Dedalus, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, articulates a complex argument that many of Shakespeare's plays tell a kind of secret family history, redescribing in multiple ways the unfaithfulness of his wife, Anne, lonely in Stratford, with the playwright's brother Richard. If Shakespeare wrote coded plays at all, why not that code? Stephen actually accounts for certain recurrent character types and scenes in Shakespeare's plays better than Asquith or Wilson does, but what all the Shakespearean code breakers have in common is a tendency to assume that Shakespeare shares their own concerns.

Stephen Dedalus has a tortured family life that dominates his thinking; he assumes the same of Shakespeare. Wilson works in an academic environment obsessed with the relations between literature and politics; he assumes that Shakespeare had similar obsessions. Asquith got the idea for her book after watching—with her husband, a British diplomat—a Cold War-era dramatization, in Moscow, of some Chekhov stories. Noting that the plays were full of political subtexts that everyone in the audience laughed at, she began to suspect that Shakespeare's plays could have been similarly encoded and concerned with similar issues.

Even assuming that Asquith, Wilson, Hammer-schmidt-Hummel, et al. could agree on what is encoded in the plays, there remains the question of why. Any message that could be decoded by Shakespeare's fellow Catholics could also be decoded by Elizabeth's Catholic-hunting spies, who surely were just as likely to show up for a nice evening at the theater as anyone else. So why run the risk? What would Shakespeare be trying to communicate, and for what purpose? When Portia's favorite suitor chooses the leaden casket, the third offered, does that mean "Meet a member of the Montague family in Leadenhall Street on the third day from today"? (Wilson thinks that Portia represents the great English Catholic family the Montagues partly because she lives in Belmont. Asquith's association of Portia with Queen Elizabeth is at least a little more reasonable, since they share the experience of being besieged by suitors. Even so, isn't it

worth noting that Elizabeth rejected all of hers, whereas Portia eagerly chooses Bassanio?) I have scoured the pages of these writers trying to get answers to these questions but with little success. The idea that the plays hold any secrets or hidden messages is the most dubious of them all.

Even quite serious humanistic scholars can lose sight of probabilities and complexities when captivated by a thesis—especially since, unlike their counterparts in the sciences, they tend not to create control groups, even as thought experiments. And, of course, there are still fewer restraints on those like Dan Brown who just make stuff up. As the great Anglican scholar N.T. Wright—now bishop of Durham but formerly canon theologian at Westminster Abbey—has pointed out, Brown "makes gaffe after gaffe which could have been corrected by ten minutes of walking around with his eyes open. The abbey has towers, not spires. You cannot see parliament from St. James's Park. College Garden is an extremely private place, not 'a very public place' outside the abbey's walls. You cannot look out into it from the chapter house; nor is there a 'long hallway' leading to the latter, with a 'heavy wooden door' at the end. Ten minutes' observation by a junior research assistant could have put all this right. If Brown is so careless, and carelessly inventive, in details as easy to check as those, why should we trust him in anything else?"

None of this matters to someone caught up in the rapture of discovery, of suddenly seeing the meaning that was there all along—and this too is an important element of many of these stories of decryption, the "hidden in plain sight" motif. The secret just waited to be noticed, like Poe's purloined letter. Why did I never see the angle of Jesus' limbs in Leonardo's painting of the Last Supper, or the fact, so obvious now that Dan Brown's characters point it out, that the disciple on his right hand is a girl? This is one of the reasons these sorts of interpretations tend to attach themselves to the most famous books and artworks: The whole world has been looking at this and never figured it out.

And, of course, the pleasure is intensified by the fact that others are still in the dark. Isn't the greatest pleasure offered by the Catholic-Shakespeare books the thrill of imagining ourselves as a secret Catholic there in the Globe Theatre, receiving every single one of the Bard's coded messages like arrows shot right into our chests, while the rabble and the groundlings surround us with their blank ignorance? We stand there like St. Sebastian, stuck full of shafts while our eyes glaze over in ecstasy.

Above all, I think, these fanciful tales appeal to what I can only call our plain laziness. The interpretation of literary texts is actually hard work. You have to know a great deal about the history of culture and about the

various forms and genres and techniques of literary writing to have a shot at really figuring out a major work of literary art.

Likewise, the understanding of paintings—especially paintings made centuries ago by people who thought very differently than we think, who lived in a very different social world, whose ideas of what paintings represent and how they represent it are often quite alien to what we take for granted—is achievable only by years, even decades, of scrupulous attentiveness to work after work after work. And the deepest wisdom about the productions of culture will always acknowledge the possibility of error, will always see that subtle alterations in how we think of this detail or that theme can result in quite dramatically different pictures of the work as a whole.

But the code breakers offer a much more consoling message. They tell us that we don't need to read carefully or think hard or labor for years on end. All the work that needs to be done they have already done. Understanding is nothing more than putting the right key in the right lock. They have the key; smiling, they hold it forth to us. All we have to do is take it—after, of course, paying them a fee that is really quite trifling in comparison to the weight of the wisdom they proffer.

Alan Jacobs is professor of English at Wheaton College and author of The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis.

Southern Baptists After the Revolution

Timothy George

All ecclesiastical revolutions eventually run out of steam. New concerns emerge, and different leaders come to the fore. It is too early to tell whether the election of Frank Page as president of the Southern Baptist Convention signals such a change, but there are signs that a historic shift may be underway within America's largest Protestant denomination.

The pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, Page won a first-ballot victory this summer against two prominent candidates with close ties to what is sometimes called the college of cardinals—a close-knit circle of Southern Baptist Convention leaders who have handpicked the denomination's recent presidents. Even Page was surprised by his election. Since the conservative resurgence began in 1979, only once, in 1994, has a candidate not supported by

those leaders been elected to head the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ever since the Southern Baptists were organized in 1845, there has been a machine with powerful personalities struggling to control it. In the 1950s, J.D. Grey, a New Orleans pastor, said of Louie Newton, an older leader from Georgia, "Louie and his buddies have run this convention for too long, and I'm going to take it away from them"—which J.D. and his buddies did.

When the recent Southern Baptist upheaval—called simply the Controversy—began in the 1970s, many saw it as just another preachers' fight, a spectacle with all the charms of a late-night row among alley cats. But two factors distinguished this commotion from earlier power struggles: This was not a palace coup, but a grassroots revolution fueled by a strong sense of denominational alienation by many ordinary Baptists who resented the elitist rule of the Baptist bureaucrats who ran the machine at the time.

There was also a major theological concern, which gave the masses a cause for which to fight: the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of the Bible. For centuries the Bible had been the central icon in Baptist life, and it seemed to be under attack by some Baptist scholars who questioned the historical and miraculous elements in Scripture. After struggling for more than a decade, conservatives seized control of the denominational machinery and began to implement changes in the boards and agencies of the convention.

In recent years, however, there has been a growing anxiety within the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptists support thousands of missionaries through a national giving plan called the Cooperative Program. But prolonged conflict within the denomination's two large mission boards has left many Baptists unhappy. And, as the Internet chatter on Baptist websites before Page's election showed, many feel the circle of fellowship has been drawn much too tightly in recent years. They resent the angry spirit and bitter tone that have marked much Baptist discourse. Some feel excluded and believe the Southern Baptist Convention is being distracted from its primary purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission. The commitment to an evangelical view of Scripture seems secure, but some of the other concerns that fueled the Controversy in the first place have surfaced again—and this time, with a vengeance.

Doubtless, many voted for Page because of his strong support for the Cooperative Program, an important issue for a denomination that has to raise an annual budget of \$200 million from voluntary giving. Still, his election was unexpected and can best be explained by an odd coalition of diverse subgroups within the Southern Baptist Convention that came together in Greensboro, North Carolina, to register their concerns. At least five such groups can be identified.

(1) *Charismatics*. Very few Southern Baptists engage in public speaking in tongues or other Pentecostal practices. But the charismatic movement has influenced Baptist life in music, worship, and spirituality, including distinctive forms of prayer. Occasionally congregations have been ousted from Baptist associations over charismatic issues. But recent efforts to exclude from missionary appointment all who have a “private prayer language” seemed to many ordinary Baptists both intrusive and unnecessary. As one person said to me, “If we are serious about sharing the gospel around the world, shouldn’t we be glad that we still have missionaries who pray rather than setting up a bureau of prayer inspectors!”

(2) *Neo-Calvinists*. Early Baptists, both in England and America, were strongly influenced by Reformed theology, and there has been a growing interest in reclaiming this tradition within the Southern Baptist Convention. The “Calvinism boys,” as one of their detractors dubbed them, have made some folks nervous for fear that too much emphasis on God’s initiative in salvation might discourage human efforts in witness and evangelism. This issue was tackled head-on by Paige Patterson and Al Mohler, two Southern Baptist educators, in a public debate at this year’s convention. While clearly holding to different views, they agreed that both parties should have a place at the Baptist table. And Page, not a Calvinist himself, said the same thing. If this spirit prevails, there will not be a divisive fight over Calvinism, as some have predicted. No doubt, both hyper-Calvinism and five-point Arminianism are still out of bounds among Southern Baptists, but between those two extremes there is room for a healthy debate on the precise balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

(3) *Woman’s Missionary Union*. Another surprise event at this year’s convention was the decision to reject the effort by some to change the auxiliary status of the Woman’s Missionary Union, a missions-support group, and bring it under the direct control of the convention. This decision should not be interpreted as an incipient feminism in Southern Baptist life (out of more than forty thousand churches, only a few dozen have female pastors), but rather as an affirmation of a pattern of cooperation that has served Baptist mission causes well for more than a century. As someone said, “Instead of our telling women again what they cannot do, for once let’s thank them for what they have done!”

(4) *Baptist Bloggers*. These are younger, Internet-savvy pastors who represent diverse views across the spectrum of Southern Baptist Convention life. But they all have one thing in common: They aren’t veterans of the Baptist wars over the past few decades. Some of them have been influenced by the Willow Creek and

Saddleback mega-church models of church life. They are mostly conservative in belief and committed to sharing the gospel in today’s culture, which, they are quick to remind you, is not the culture of the 1950s. The bloggers are not a well-defined group, but they are adept at agitation and networking, key elements in any emerging revolution. These Baptist bolsheviks are intelligent, articulate, aggressive, and a force to be reckoned with.

(5) *Younger Moderates*. Most of the older moderate groups defeated in the long Baptist wars gave up on the Southern Baptist Convention some years ago and established their own groups outside—or, at best, on the margins of—the denomination. Some still grieve the loss of the denominational empire that once was theirs. It seems unlikely, however, that such groups can capture the hearts of even the moderates among the rising Baptist generation. One thing is sure: The more such groups embrace the *Kulturprotestantismus* of the liberal mainline churches, the less likely this is to happen. Yet some of the most substantive theology being written by Baptist scholars today comes from a little-known circle of mostly younger moderates who have shown a surprising interest in quite traditional themes such as the deeper meaning of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the covenantal disciplines of congregational life, and the positive role of creeds and confessions in the life of the church. Steven Harmon’s recent book, *Towards Baptist Catholicity*, is an example—and it stands in marked contrast to the older libertarian, Emersonian version of Baptist identity. These younger scholars are not so much a part of the coalition that elected Page as they are potential allies for conservatives within a reconciled Baptist future.

But is such reconciliation possible? It will not be easy and it will not happen quickly. But this summer’s meeting in North Carolina suggests opportunities for a renewed Southern Baptist Convention that can build on the gains of the past generation without refighting all its harsh battles. The coalition that elected Page is fragile and not likely to hold together very long in the absence of a compelling vision of a believable future, one that is faithful to the verities of the Baptist heritage and also generous, winsome, and filled with grace.

Perhaps this attitude is best seen in the most influential Southern Baptists in America today: Billy Graham, a “prophet with honor” and America’s chaplain for more than fifty years; Chuck Colson, evangelist, prison reformer, and cofounder of Evangelicals and Catholics Together; and Rick Warren, a pastor whose writings have touched millions of lives. In their commitment to Christ and the Bible, and their desire to share the gospel, these three represent the best of the

Baptist vision today. Each in his own way has wrapped his arms around the world and drawn it closer to the Father's heart.

Another surprise happened in Greensboro this year. Condoleezza Rice became the first secretary of state to address the Southern Baptist Convention, and she received a thunderous ovation. The media focused on her stirring patriotic speech and the political implications of her appearance. Since Southern Baptists abandoned native son Jimmy Carter and joined the Reagan revolution in 1980, they have become an increasingly important part of those values-voters who have made the Republicans, at least for now, the majority party in American political life. Rice was there, in part, to shore up that alliance.

But something else about her visit should not go unnoticed. Rice, who grew up in the segregated South, became the second Alabama-born African-American woman (Coretta Scott King was the first) ever to speak to the Southern Baptist Convention. The symbolism was poignant: This great-granddaughter of slaves was addressing a denomination once led by slave owners. Such an event would have been unthinkable just a few decades ago—but so would the election of someone like Frank Page during the long years of the Controversy that roiled the Southern Baptist Convention. Some changes are for the better.

Timothy George, an ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Convention, is dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University and a member of the FIRST THINGS editorial board.

Jaroslav Pelikan, Doctor Ecclesiae

Robert Louis Wilken

When I walked into the chapel at St. Vladimir's Seminary on a bright spring morning for the funeral of Jaroslav Pelikan, I saw an open casket in the center of the church. Next to it was a young woman standing at a reading desk chanting a psalm with tears running down her cheeks. As she turned the pages of the psalmbook, her other arm held a young girl standing on a chair to her left. Members of the seminary community had been taking turns through the night reciting psalms as they kept vigil over Jaroslav's still body.

As I listened to the recitation of the psalms, the eyes of the saints painted on the walls of the chapel looked down on the simple ritual unfolding before them. Soon the building would be filled with mourners, but it seemed that the church was already present to commend Jaroslav to the care of the angels. When people began to take their places, I sensed that on this occasion there would be few reminders of the university world in which Pelikan had lived for so many decades. Besides the Pelikan family, most in attendance were from the local community: students and faculty garbed in the Orthodox inner cassock, called a *podryasnik*; mothers and wives; women and men carrying infants in arms; two little girls playing quietly on the wood floor close to the casket. The company that gathered that morning was more like a family, the family of the Church, a fellowship united by much deeper bonds than those of the academy. Their words and music and gestures were the solemn liturgy of God's people who had come to offer praise to the holy, mighty, and immortal God and to celebrate, in the language of the Orthodox Church, a "Divine Service for the Funeral of a Layman During the Forty Days of Pascha."

It was fitting that Professor Pelikan's funeral should take place at St. Vladimir's. He and his wife, Sylvia, had been regular communicants in this chapel, and his final book, a theological commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, was dedicated to "my liturgical family at Saint Vladimir's" with the inscription, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). But there was another reason a theological seminary was the right place. Though Jaroslav Pelikan had a distinguished career in the university, he was a graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, where he taught for several years. He always felt at home in a theological community and saw himself, and was revered by others, first and foremost as a *doctor ecclesiae*, a teacher of the Church.

The first volume of his history of Christian thought, *The Christian Tradition*, begins: "What the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches and confesses on the basis of the Word of God: This is Christian doctrine." His life was devoted to the exposition and teaching of that Christian doctrine, but he knew that doctrine is not the only activity of the Church. The Church worships God and serves the poor and needy, the sick and dying, and is always more than a school. And yet it cannot be less than a school, for without doctrine, without teaching, it would not be the Church of Jesus Christ.

By doctrine Pelikan did not mean just any teaching. He meant the central truths of Christianity: that God is triune, that Christ is fully God and fully man—those teachings that were solemnly declared in the ancient

councils and are confessed in the ecumenical creeds. His historical study had convinced him that the most faithful bearer of the apostolic faith was the great tradition of thought and practice as expounded by the orthodox Church Fathers.

In the last generation, it has become fashionable among historians of Christian thought not only to seek to understand the Gnostics or the Arians but also to become their advocates and to suggest, sometimes obliquely, sometimes straightforwardly, that orthodox Christianity made its way not by argument and truth but by power and coercion. The real heroes in Christian history are the dissidents, the heretics, whose insights and thinking were suppressed by the imperious bishops of the great Church.

Pelikan never succumbed to this temptation. In the classroom, in public lectures, and in his many books, he was an advocate of creedal Christianity, of the classical formulations of Christian doctrine. In one of his last books, *Credo*, he cited such writers as Edward Gibbon, Adolf von Harnack, and Matthew Arnold, who believed that “creeds pass” and “no altar standeth whole.” But he answered them with John Henry Newman, who said that dogma is the principle of religion, and Lionel Trilling, who wrote that “when the dogmatic principle in religion is slighted, religion goes along for a while on generalized emotion and ethical intention . . . and then loses the force of its impulse, even the essence of its being.”

Pelikan knew, and his scholarship demonstrated, what many Christian theologians and Church leaders have forgotten, that over the Church’s long history, the orthodox and catholic form of Christian faith, what the Church “believes, teaches and confesses on the basis of the Word of God,” has been the most biblical, the most coherent, the most enduring, the most adaptable, and yes, the most true.

Long before the study of the biblical commentaries of the Church Fathers and medievals had become fashionable, Pelikan turned his attention to the role of the Scriptures in the formation of Christian thought. He suggested, for example, that I write my doctoral dissertation on the commentaries of St. Cyril of Alexandria. He was not alone in urging study of the classical Christian biblical commentators. In the 1950s the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac was publishing his four-volume *Exégèse Médiévale*, where he showed that theological science and the interpretation of the Scriptures are one.

What de Lubac did for the patristic and medieval period Pelikan did for Martin Luther. Helping prepare the American edition of Luther’s works, he insisted that fully half of the volumes be devoted to Luther’s

exegetical writings. Luther had been known and interpreted primarily through his polemical and catechetical works, and the history of Christian thought was being taught as largely an affair of ideas and concepts, theological terms and philosophical distinctions, that floated free of the exegetical scaffolding supporting them. In a companion volume to the edition *Luther the Expositor*, Pelikan challenged his fellow scholars to open their eyes to the scriptural foundations of Christian thought. “Historians have sought to assess the influence of everything from the theologian’s vanity to the theologian’s viscera upon the formulation of theological doctrines, meanwhile regarding as naïve and misinformed the suggestion that the Bible may be a source of these doctrines.”

Pelikan’s scholarship helped put classical Christian thought at the center of the theological enterprise. The great figures of the past were not disqualified because of the accident of death. He taught us that Christian thinking takes place in conversation with a great company of thinkers whose writings span the centuries: Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Symeon the New Theologian, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, even Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, and Adolf von Harnack (whose picture hung on his study wall across from one of Alexander Schmemmann). More than any other scholar, he gave the history of Christian thought a public face in the United States.

And he had the largest vision. Most other scholars were specialists in a particular historical period, but Pelikan roamed freely and confidently over the whole history of Christian thought—and that history was never simply history for him. He had a certain diffidence about the merits of modernity. The great thinkers of the past were living interlocutors whose ideas, way of reasoning, and imagination commended them to Christian thinkers today.

When Pelikan began to teach in the 1940s, it was assumed, at least among most Protestant thinkers (and it must not be forgotten that for most of his life Pelikan was Lutheran), that the chief points of reference for theology were the Bible (as filtered through the historical critics), the Reformers, and the nineteenth-century thinkers. There would be an occasional genuflection in the direction of Augustine or Anselm of Canterbury, but the Greek Church Fathers, the Byzantines, and the medievals were seldom part of the conversation. Today it is unthinkable that one can do serious theological work without reference to the full sweep of the classi-

cal Christian tradition. This has brought a new confidence, a new assertiveness, a new willingness, to present the truth of the faith on its own terms and to interpret the Scriptures within the Church's theological and liturgical tradition.

I saw Jaroslav Pelikan for the last time a few weeks before his death. I knew that he was gravely ill, and I wanted to have one last conversation with him. On that day he was bright and alert, and I enjoyed a simple Lenten luncheon with him and Sylvia at their home in Hamden, Connecticut. We talked about many things: about his scholarship and writing, about the Church Fathers, about his joy in the Orthodox Church, about friends and colleagues, about books and music, and about the strange ways of God. He learned that he had terminal lung cancer two days after he had received the prestigious Kluge Prize from the Library of Congress.

He said he had been reading again Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (even though Milton was an Arian and probably a Pelagian, quipped Pelikan), and Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. But it was when we came to music that his eyes shone and he spoke from the heart. He said that he

was listening mostly to Bach and in particular to the B-minor Mass. As we talked about Bach, he told me a story about the conductor Robert Shaw. On several occasions Shaw had invited Pelikan to give a theological lecture in connection with the performance of a great religious choral work at Carnegie Hall in New York. On the evening Shaw conducted Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, before he lifted his baton to begin the performance, he addressed the audience. He said that for some in the audience this evening, this will be the first time you will hear the *St. Matthew Passion*; for others, it will be the last time. Then he turned to the orchestra and choir to begin the opening chorus.

Jaroslav Pelikan will not hear again the serene boys' voices high above the full chorus in the opening strains of the majestic choral "O Lamm Gottes unschuldig." Now he joins the "great number, which no man can number, from every nation, from all tribes, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb.'"

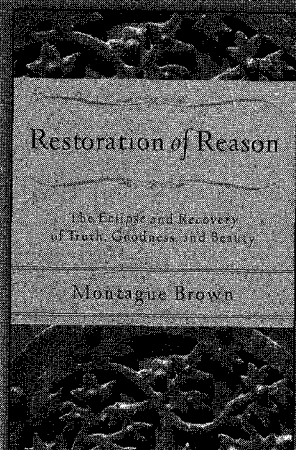
Robert Louis Wilken is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of History at the University of Virginia.

Nothing New

Prophets foretell
And priests atone
And where men dwell
Their works are known—
How good it is to know
That nothing new is told
That all was done before
I was born to behold
The sky at dawn once more
Not knowing how or when
Now becomes *then*.

Samuel Menashe

EXTENDING *the* CONVERSATION



Restoration of Reason

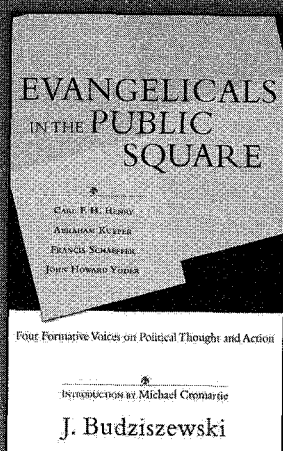
THE ECLIPSE AND RECOVERY OF TRUTH, GOODNESS, AND BEAUTY
Montague Brown

0801031540 • 272 pp.
\$21.99p

"Montague Brown's book examines briefly, yet penetratingly, the chief thinkers and trends in Western philosophy. His fair analysis of each figure allows him to classify each in accord with general and recurring characteristics, in light of which their relative strengths and weaknesses are delineated. But Brown's basic approach is modest, and he certainly does not go in for 'lion-taming.' His style is quite accessible, but above all, sensible. He thus provides a helpful guide for teachers and students in courses based on reading classic texts, to which Brown gently but firmly leads his readers."—**Frederick Lawrence**, Boston College

"Not modern or postmodern but premodern! That is Brown's response to the scientific rationalism that lost touch with truth, goodness, and beauty. His scholarship is thorough and his argument persuasive. A rewarding journey back to Aquinas."

—**Arthur F. Holmes**, Wheaton College



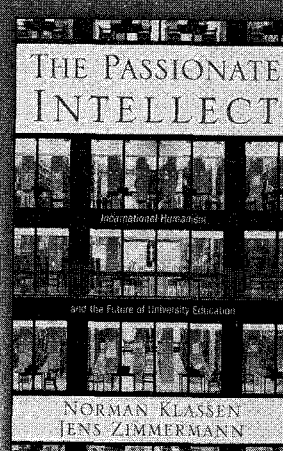
Evangelicals in the Public Square

FOUR FORMATIVE VOICES ON POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ACTION
J. Budziszewski

0801031567 • 224 pp.
\$19.99p

In this work, J. Budziszewski examines evangelical political thought over the past fifty years through four key figures—Carl F. H. Henry, Abraham Kuyper, Francis Schaeffer, and John Howard Yoder—to argue that, in addition to Scripture, the evangelical political movement should be informed by the tradition of natural law.

David L. Weeks (Azusa Pacific University) responds to Henry, William Edgar (Westminster Seminary) responds to the Schaeffer section, John Bolt (Calvin Seminary) comments on Kuyper, and Ashley Woodiwiss (Wheaton College) offers remarks on the Yoder portion. Jean Bethke Elshtain (University of Chicago) provides the afterword, summarizing the dialogue and offering her own observations. In addition, the book includes an introduction by Michael Cromartie of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.



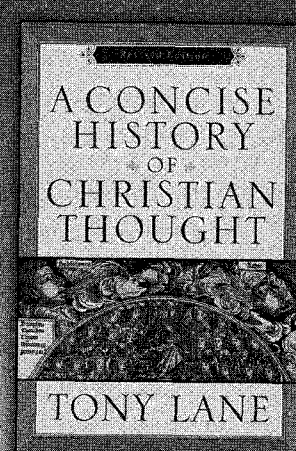
The Passionate Intellect

INCARNATIONAL HUMANISM AND THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Norman Klassen and Jens Zimmermann

0801027349 • 208 pp.
\$16.99p

"*The Passionate Intellect* provides an excellent practical guide for those Christian students (and scholars generally) committed to an integration of faith and the intellectual life. Providing concrete directions through the increasingly labyrinthine corridors of academic ideologies, the book offers useful insights into the long tradition of Christian humanism, its defense of full human dignity, the goodness of creation and personal endeavors within that creation, and the joy of learning and critical analysis, 'embraced in humility and trust'—the crown of incarnational humanism and common grace."—**Peter C. Erb**, University of Prince Edward Island.



A Concise History of Christian Thought, rev. ed.

Tony Lane

0801031591 • 288 pp.
\$19.99p

"This is a book that will prove exceptionally useful not only to students but also to all those Christians who know many of the names of the great Christian thinkers of past and present but, in many cases, have only the vaguest impression of what they actually thought. Here they can find a succinct, accurate, readily intelligible, and interesting account of the thought of Cyril of Alexandria, John Wyclif, Jonathan Edwards, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Küng, and many others, mostly individual theologians but also including some creeds, confessions, and councils. Each period has a brief scene-setting introduction, and each thinker is not only described but also quoted—a valuable feature because even a brief paragraph gives the reader something of the 'flavor' of each person's work."

—**Richard Bauckham**, St. Andrews University

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Theocracy, Theocracy, Theocracy

Ross Douthat

*American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion,
Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*
by Kevin Phillips
Viking, 480 pages, \$26.95

The Baptizing of America: The Religious Right's Plans for the Rest of Us
by James Rudin
Thunder's Mouth, 300 pages, \$26

Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism
by Michelle Goldberg
W.W. Norton, 224 pages, \$23.95

*Thy Kingdom Come: How The Religious Right Distorts the Faith
and Threatens America: An Evangelical's Lament*
by Randall Balmer
Basic, 242 pages, \$24.95

This is a paranoid moment in American politics. A host of conspiracies haunt our national imagination, and apparent incompetence is assumed to be the consequence of a dark design: President Bush knew about the attacks of September 11 in advance, or else the Israelis did; the Straussians took us to war in Iraq, unless the oil companies did; the federal government let the levees break in New Orleans, unless it dynamited them itself.

Perhaps the strangest of these strange stories, though, is the notion that twenty-first-century America is slouching toward theocracy. This is an old paranoia: Back in 1952, the science-fiction libertarian Robert Heinlein's *Revolt in 2100* envisioned a religious tyranny toppled by a Freemason-led rebellion; in 1985, Margaret Atwood's feminist dystopia *The Handmaid's Tale* imagined America as a Christian-fascist "Republic of Gilead," with its capital in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and its public executions staged in Har-

vard Yard. But the fear of theocracy has become a defining panic of the Bush era, reaching a fever pitch in the weeks after the 2004 election, when a host of commentators seized on polls suggesting that "moral values" had pushed the president over the top—and found in that data point a harbinger of Gilead.

Later, more cool-headed polling analysis suggested that the values explanation was something of a stretch: The movement of religious voters into the GOP played a role in Bush's victory, but the uptick in his support between 2000 and 2004 seems mainly to have reflected national-security concerns. Still, these pesky facts didn't stop Garry Wills from announcing the end of the Enlightenment and the arrival of jihad in America, or Jane Smiley from bemoaning the "ignorance and bloodlust" of Bush voters in thrall to a fire-and-brimstone God, or left-wing bloggers from chattering about "Jesusland" and "fundies" and plotting their escape to Canada.

The paranoia hasn't yet burned down to embers. The term *theocrat* has become a commonplace, employed by bomb-throwing columnists, otherwise-sensible reporters, and "centrist" Republicans such as

ROSS DOUTHAT is an associate editor at the Atlantic Monthly and the author of *Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class*.

Connecticut's Christopher Shays, who recently complained that the GOP was becoming the "party of theocracy." And now the specter of a looming Khomeinism has migrated into the realm of pop sociology, producing a spate of books with titles like *The Baptizing of America*, *Kingdom Coming*, *Thy Kingdom Come*—and, inevitably, *American Theocracy*, the Kevin Phillips jeremiad that shot to the top of the *New York Times* bestseller list this spring.

Most of these books aspire to be anthropologies, guides for the perplexed that lead the innocent reader through what the subtitle of *American Theocracy* calls "the perils and politics of radical religion." There isn't perfect agreement on what to call the religious radicals in question: Everyone employs *theocrat*, but *Kingdom Coming* also proposes Christian nationalist, while *The Baptizing of America* favors the clunky *Christocrat*. Others have suggested *Christianist*, the better to link religious conservatives to Osama bin Laden—and of course there's the ubiquitous *theocon*, suggesting a deadly mixture of Oliver Cromwell and Paul Wolfowitz.

But the various authors are in agreement about the main point, which is that something has gone terribly wrong with the separation of church and state in this country, and that America is poised to fall into the hands of people only one step from the ayatollahs. Today's battles aren't just a matter of ordinary political factionalism, they insist. The hour is much later than that, and nothing less than the republic itself hangs in the balance.

To understand what, precisely, the anti-theocrats think has gone so wrong, it's necessary to understand what they mean by the term *theocracy*. This is no easy task. The word is often used to connote government by a specific institutional faith—Shia imams in Iran, say, or Wahhabi clerics in Afghanistan—with the clergy writing laws and a temple guard enforcing them. But the clout of *institutional* religion is at low ebb in American politics. No prelate wields the kind of authority that Catholic bishops once enjoyed over urban voters, no denomination can claim the kind of influence that once belonged to the old WASP mainline, and the evangelical Protestantism that figures so prominently in anti-theocracy tracts is distinguished precisely by its lack of any centralized ecclesiastical government.

Occasionally, the anti-theocrats flirt with the possibility that one institutional church or another might pose a threat to the democratic order. In *American Theocracy*, for instance, Kevin Phillips waxes paranoid about the Southern Baptist Convention's role as the "state church" of the South, and he tallies, darkly, the

number of Baptists who have insinuated themselves into the highest levels of American government. But for the most part, the sum of all secular fears is slightly—but only slightly—more plausible than a Southern Baptist caesaropapism. The real danger, the anti-theocrats suggest, is an ecumenical theocracy that would install a right-wing Mere Christianity as its established religion, subject unbelievers to discrimination, and enshrine the Mosaic code as the law of the land.

In *The Baptizing of America*, Rabbi James Rudin—the American Jewish Committee's "senior interreligious adviser"—offers a sketch of what America will look like if the theocrats get their way. "All government employees—federal, state and local—would be required to participate in weekly Bible classes in the workplace, as well as compulsory daily prayer sessions," as would employees of any company or institution receiving federal funds. There would be a national ID card, identifying everyone by their religious beliefs, or lack thereof—and "such cards would provide Christocrats with preferential treatment in many areas of life, including home ownership, student loans, employment and education." Non-Christian faiths would be tolerated, "but younger members . . . would be strongly encouraged to formally convert to the dominant evangelical Christianity." Gay sex would be prosecuted, and "known homosexuals and lesbians would have to successfully undergo government-sponsored reeducation sessions if they applied for any public-sector jobs." Political dissent would be squashed, religious censors would keep watch over the popular culture, and "the mainstream press and the electronic media would be beaten into submission."

Sadly, Rudin's book is thin on examples of significant political actors who are proposing taking *any* of these steps, let alone all of them. What he has instead are the Christian Reconstructionists—the acolytes of the late R.J. Rushdoony—who are genuine theocrats, of a sort, and who also rank somewhere between the Free Mumia movement and the Spartacist Youth League on the totem pole of political influence in America. Yet this doesn't prevent them from figuring prominently in nearly all the anti-theocrat anthropologies, playing the same role that international communism played for right-wing paranoiacs in the 1950s: the puppet master working from the shadows and the hidden hand behind every secular setback.

Like a diehard John Bircher poring over Dwight D. Eisenhower's speeches in search of the Supreme Soviet's marching orders, Rudin scans the utterances of evangelicals and their allies for Reconstructionist language. Did Billy Graham once advise evangelicals to run for public office and take "control" of the various

branches for government? Then he must believe, with the Reconstructionists, that “all adversaries must be completely eliminated from positions of authority” and that “to achieve a divine end by any means—including cruelty, deception, and brute force—is justified.” Did Antonin Scalia suggest that government “derives its moral authority from God”? Well, he doubtless intended to issue “a legal green light” to theocrats seeking “to destroy all existing political systems . . . and replace them with their own religion-soaked political regimes.”

Perhaps most religious conservatives, Rudin generously allows, “are unaware of the potent ideology that calls for the dismantling of American democracy . . . and its replacement by an authoritarian Christian commonwealth.” But then, of course, most Eisenhower voters were unaware, in the 1950s, that Ike’s administration was infiltrated and controlled by Communist agents—and more fool they.

Similarly, Kevin Phillips announces that “for all practical purposes, Pat Robertson is a Christian Reconstructionist”—not because Robertson has ever identified himself as such but because his start-up university bears the sinister sobriquet Regent, an obvious reference to the Rushdoonian notion of Christians as God’s viceroys on Earth. Phillips doesn’t precisely accuse President Bush of being a Reconstructionist, but he notes that Bush’s GOP gets an awful lot of votes from the Mormons—who have created “a de-facto establishment of religion in the inner mountain West”—and that the Bush family “has been close” to the Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his cultish Unification Church. And then there’s Bush’s habit of encoding “private scriptural invocations” into his speeches. Not only did the president use the biblically loaded phrases “hills to climb” and “seeing the valley below” in his 2004 convention acceptance speech, but he also mentioned the “resurrection of New York City.” The *resurrection*. Clearly something sinister is afoot.

Michelle Goldberg’s *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* is marginally less ridiculous than this, perhaps because Goldberg, a reporter for *Salon*, actually spent some time among the believers and even found herself liking them. “I was treated with remarkable openness and hospitality,” she notes, and speaks with sympathy of the Christian nationalists’ eagerness “to engage in passionate discussion about the meaning of life, and about how we understand morality and reality.” But within a page, she’s quoting Hannah Arendt on the origins of totalitarianism and warning balefully that “individual decency can dissolve when groups are mobilized against diabolized enemies.”

Goldberg’s approach, like that of all the anti-theocrat authors, is to assume that the most extreme manifestation of religious conservatism must, by definition, be its most authentic expression. So she analyzes contemporary evangelicalism without once mentioning Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, or any other prominent pop theologian, and her description of megachurches—at once “temples of religious nationalism” and “tightly organized right-wing political machines”—suggests a fairly thin acquaintance with the variegated world of entrepreneurial Protestantism. The continuum of conservative Christian belief, in her telling, runs from Rushdoony on the Right to D. James Kennedy on the Left. And the taint of theocracy is everywhere, infecting everyone from Timothy McVeigh (a potential harbinger of “theocratic authoritarianism,” despite his distinct lack of Christian beliefs) to Marvin Olasky (who “seems to be drawn to totalitarian ideologies”).

You can even be a totalitarian-theocrat-authoritarian without realizing it. Describing a speaker at a rally following the death of Terri Schiavo, Goldberg admits that the lawyer David Gibbs “is a Baptist, not a Reconstructionist.” But then comes the kicker: “But whether he knew it or not, Reconstructionism shaped his thinking, just as it shaped the thinking of the Christian nationalist movement as a whole.”

These inanities are almost excusable, since Goldberg is such an obvious prisoner of her biases and preconceptions. Whereas Randall Balmer’s *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America: An Evangelical’s Lament* is less forgivable, because Balmer ought to have known better. He is an evangelical Christian, a professor of religious history at Columbia, and the author of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, a largely sympathetic exploration of evangelical belief in America. Yet *Thy Kingdom Come*—a glorified pamphlet, despite its endless subtitle—is indistinguishable from the general run of secularist hysterics, save for a smug reference to Balmer’s spotless Sunday school attendance record and a patina of “real Baptist” outrage over how the Religious Right has supposedly hijacked his heritage.

There’s certainly room, after thirty years of culture war, for an informed and evenhanded critique of Christian conservatism, and Balmer’s background would seem to make him an ideal writer for the job. But while he occasionally nods in the direction of intelligent criticism—noting the disparity between the Christian Right’s fixation on gay marriage, say, and its long-running silence on divorce; or zinging religious conservatives for writing the Bush administration a blank check in the war on terror—these arguments are quickly dropped in favor of the usual litany of anti-

theocrat complaints, flavored with the usual apocalyptic rhetoric.

"What would America look like if the Religious Right had its way?" Balmer wonders. "The best answer" is that Christian conservatism "hankers for the kind of homogeneous theocracy that the Puritans tried to establish in seventeenth-century Massachusetts." A few attempts to insert Intelligent Design into public school curricula constitute an "insidious" plot to overturn the Enlightenment, while the campaign to allow voluntary prayer in public schools is an attempt "to dismantle the First Amendment." In the debate over vouchers and homeschooling, Balmer (who opposes both) assures his readers that "the future of American democracy hangs in the balance."

Once again, all roads lead to Rushdoony. Reconstructionism, *Thy Kingdom Come* asserts, has driven evangelicalism's "radical tack to the right," influencing everyone from Pat Robertson to Richard Land to Jerry Falwell to Roy Moore. But unlike Rudin or Phillips, Balmer doesn't bother to do close readings of conservative speeches, teasing out the Reconstructionist code words and theocratic allusions. He has all the evidence he needs: The Rushdoonian Chalcedon Foundation's website, Balmer announces with the air of a lawyer delivering an airtight summation, once published a defense of Roy Moore, which was penned "by an associate professor at Falwell's Liberty University." So Rushdoony is Moore is Falwell: Case closed.

When the evidence for Rushdoonian infiltration of the Religious Right grows thin for even the most diligent decoder, the subject is usually changed to the Rapture, another supposed pillar of the emerging theocratic edifice. Premillennial dispensationalism's emphasis on the imminent collapse of all institutions, foreign and domestic, would seem an odd fit with Reconstructionism's idea of hastening Christ's coming by building his (political) kingdom on Earth. But every 1950s conspiracist knew that when Communists seemed to differ—Tito and Stalin, Stalin and Mao—it only concealed a deeper concord. Similarly, everyone on the Christian Right is understood to be on the same side, no matter their superficial disagreements.

And the Rapture thesis has too much explanatory power to be ignored. Why did George W. Bush go to war in Iraq? The answers are all in the Book of Revelation—or perhaps on the "Christian fiction" aisle of your local Barnes and Noble. It is "eerie," writes Phillips, "to see so many Bush administration foreign-policy qualities anticipated" in the *Left Behind* novels. One step further into absurdity, Balmer informs his readers that "the belief in dispensational premillennial-

ism" explains the lousy church architecture of the last fifty years: "Why invest your resources in building or ornamentation when Jesus will return at any time?"

Or again, why are Christocrats fiddling while the Late Great Planet Earth burns? In a *New York Review of Books* essay on "The Evangelist Menace," Bill Moyers explained the theocrats' reasoning this way: "Why care about the earth when the droughts, floods, famine, and pestilence brought by ecological collapse are signs of the apocalypse foretold in the Bible? Why care about global climate change when you and yours will be rescued in the Rapture?"

Never mind that conservative Catholics tend to be relatively supportive of environmental regulation, that evangelicals are divided on the issue (and perhaps trending leftward), and that the Bush administration's refusal to take dramatic steps to combat global warming—like the Clinton administration's refusal before it—probably has more to do with economics than eschatology. Never mind, too, that the main evidence for the pernicious influence of apocalypticism seems to be the success of a series of bestselling thrillers, which is rather like trying to divine a widespread gnostic political conspiracy by tabulating sales of *The Da Vinci Code*.

Never mind, because the Rushdoony-and-Rapture theory's implausibility is crucial to its appeal. Just as a plausible account of American politics in the 1950s would have left no room for the fantasies of the John Birch Society, a reasonable account of the Religious Right would have to accept the possibility that religious conservatives are fairly normal American political actors, seeking to further their agenda through normal political channels. Or as *National Review's* Ramesh Ponnuru put it, in an essay written amid the "values voter" hysteria of 2004:

It may be instructive to think about the wish list of Christian-conservative organizations involved in politics. They would generally prohibit abortion, and perhaps research that destroys human embryos. They would have the government refuse to accord legal standing to homosexual relationships. They would restrict pornography in various ways. They would have more prayer in the schools, and less evolution. They think that religious groups should be able to participate in federal programs without compromising their beliefs. They would replace sex education with abstinence education. They want the government to promote marital stability. . . . Nearly every one of these policies—and all of the most conservative ones—would merely turn the clock back to the late 1950s. That may be a very bad idea, but the America of the 1950s was not a theocracy.

This reality poses no particular problem if you simply *disagree* with religious conservatives about abor-

tion or gay marriage or prayer in public schools. But if you're committed to the notion that religious conservatives represent an existential threat to democratic government, you need a broader definition of theocracy to convey your sense of impending doom. Which is why the anti-theocrats often suggest that it doesn't take mullahs, an established church, or a Reconstructionist ban on adultery to make a theocracy. All you need are politicians who invoke religion and apply Christian principles to public policy.

If that's all it takes to make a theocracy, then these writers are correct: Contemporary America is run by theocrats. Of course, by that measure, so was the America of every previous era. The United States has always been at once a secular republic and a religious nation, reflexively libertarian and fiercely pious, and this tension has been working itself out in our politics for more than two hundred years. It's often been a mixed blessing, giving us Prohibition as well as abolition, Jesse Jackson as well as Reinhold Niebuhr, the obsession with free silver as well as the zeal for civil rights. But there's no way to give an account of American history without grappling with this tension—and with the role played, for good and ill and sometimes both, by religious reformers from Jonathan Edwards all the way down to Jerry Falwell.

Yet this is a history that the anti-theocrats seem determined to reject. The Christian Right isn't just bad for America because of its right-wing misapplication of religious faith, they suggest—it's bad for America because *any* application of faith to politics is inevitably poisonous, intolerant, and illiberal.

"Religion in America has always functioned best from the margins," Randall Balmer explains, urging Christians to retreat into a countercultural role that he claims is closer to what both the gospel and the Founders had in mind. (In Balmer's world, homeschooling your children doesn't count as being "countercultural," but voting Democratic does.) "There is no such thing as a Christian politics," Garry Wills intoned recently in a *New York Times* op-ed, warning liberals against trying to turn religion to their advantage. "If it is a politics, it cannot be Christian." In a *Time* magazine essay defending his use of the Osama-inflected term *Christianist* to describe religious conservatives, Andrew Sullivan announced his opposition "to any politicization of the gospels by any party, Democratic or Republican, by partisan black churches or partisan white ones. 'My kingdom is not of this world,' Jesus insisted. What part of that do we not understand?"

In *Kingdom Coming*, Michelle Goldberg dismisses any talk of a Christian influence on the American founding as right-wing revisionism and then offers a

bowdlerized history of her own, in which we were bequeathed a pristinely secular republic that the fundamentalists have been chipping away at ever since. "Several times in our history," she notes, "apparently innocuous references to God have been injected into public life during national crises, only to be used later to legitimate further erosions of church-state separation." These erosions include the "In God We Trust" added to the currency in 1863, the elimination of Sunday mail in 1912, and the 1954 insertion of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Obviously, the theocrats play a long game.

Whenever politicians invoke religion, Kevin Phillips suggests in a characteristic passage, the people perish: "The newly Christian fourth-century Rome of the Emperor Constantine and his successors held up the cross as Rome faced military defeat and crumbling frontiers from Hadrian's Wall to Assyria. So did seventeenth-century Spain, the proud but ill-omened command post of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Vestments of crusaderdom also cloaked imperial Britain's overreach in World War I and its aftermath."

In addition to casting religious conservatives as mullahs, proto-fascists, and agents of American decline, this strict-separationist interpretation of world history frees the anti-theocrats from the messy business of actually *arguing* with their opponents. From sex education and government support for religious charities to stem cells and abortion, it's enough to call something "faith-based" and dismiss it. Indeed, reading through the anti-theocrat literature, one gets the sense that the surest way to judge if a political idea is wrong, dangerous, or antidemocratic is to tally up the number of religious people who support it.

Except that nobody really believes this line. Just a few weeks before he announced that a "Christian politics" was a contradiction in terms, Garry Wills was in the *New York Review of Books* celebrating the role of the clergy in the civil rights movement and wiping a nostalgic tear from his eye as he declared that "there was a time, not so long ago, when religion was a force for liberation in America." After years of blasting any religious encroachment on the political sphere as a threat to the Constitution, the *New York Times* editorial page awoke to find Cardinal Roger Mahony advocating civil disobedience by Catholics to protest an immigration bill—and immediately praised the cardinal for adding "a moral dimension to what has largely been a debate about politics and economics." After spending two hundred pages describing all the evils that would pour through any breach in the wall between church and state, Michelle Goldberg suggests that liberals should hope that "lead-

ers on the Religious Left will find a way to channel some of America's moral fervor into a new social gospel."

And just a chapter before launching into a florid denunciation of the Christian Right's "lust for political power and cultural influence," Randall Balmer celebrates Victorian evangelicals for taking on "the task of reforming society according to the standards of godliness," and seeking "generally to make the world a better place." He praises William Jennings Bryan for being "a political liberal by today's standards" and even defends the Great Commoner against a "brutal character assassination at the hands of H.L. Mencken" during the Scopes trial—this from an author who devotes thirty pages to attacking Intelligent Design as a "battering ram" for theocrats bent on the "conquest of American society." Bryan, Balmer explains, "had fewer qualms about Darwinism itself than he did about the social effects of evolutionary theory."

A Christian is allowed to entertain such doubts, in other words, and allowed to mix religion and politics in support of sweeping social reforms—but only if those reforms are safely identified with the political Left, and with the interests of the Democratic party.

There are ways to avoid this contradiction, but none of them are particularly persuasive. Sometimes it's argued that what sets the contemporary Christian Right apart from previous iterations of politically active religion isn't its Christianity per se but its unwillingness to couch argument in terms that nonbelievers can accept—to use "public reason," in the Rawlsian phrase, to make a political case that doesn't rely on Bible-thumping. As a prudential matter, the case for public reason makes a great deal of sense. But one searches American history in vain—from abolitionist polemics down to Martin Luther King's Scripture-saturated speeches—for any evidence of this supposedly ironclad rule being rigorously applied, or applied at all.

And besides, religious conservatives do, frequently and loudly, make arguments for their positions on non-theological grounds. Perhaps not as often as they should, to judge by the movement's repeated political and cultural defeats (defeats that the anti-theocrats gloss over, since it would complicate their portrait of an all-powerful Christofascism on the march). But the evils of abortion, the value of heterosexual monogamy, the costs of promiscuity and pornography—all these issues are constantly being raised by social conservatives without appeals to the divine inspiration of the Bible. Tellingly, when a professor at Patrick Henry College explains to Goldberg how he teaches students to "use terms and facts that the other side accepts as

reasonable," she calls it a "rhetorical two-step" and casts it as yet another example of the devious Christianist project of political infiltration: Heads you're a theocrat, tails you're a theocrat.

Again, perhaps today's Christians are too comprehensive in their political aims; religious involvement in politics is acceptable, this argument runs, so long as it takes place on an issue-by-issue basis, but the more sweeping the goals, the stronger the whiff of theocracy. For Jeff Sharlet, for instance, writing a *Rolling Stone* profile of Sam Brownback, it's the senator's willingness to talk about a sweeping Christian renewal that makes him creepy. Brownback, echoing John Paul II, says he hopes for a "cultural springtime" in America, and Sharlet sums up this vision as "a theocratic order that is pleasant and balmy."

Except that it's hard to imagine anything more sweeping than Martin Luther King's dream for a Sermon on the Mount-style revolution in the South. King was a single-issue activist, in a sense, but his issue was the mystic renovation of an entire society. Similarly, the social gospel of Bryan's era aimed at bringing an entire industrial society into line with biblical principles, making it easily as comprehensive as anything that Sam Brownback has ever dreamed up. So too with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, whose bishops have over the years taken positions—often ill-advisedly but never theocratically—on issues ranging from marriage law to nuclear war to immigration. If anything, the single-issue argument is often used *against* Catholic conservatives, who are accused of being too narrowly focused on questions of life and death rather than the larger "seamless garment" of Catholic social teaching.

So maybe it's not the issues, but the actors—the Christian Right's narrow base of supporters, for instance, and its identification with a single political party, both of which contrast unfavorably with the supposed ecumenism and bipartisanship of the civil rights movement. This is the argument of Sullivan, among others; he admits that "the civil-rights movement was indeed a fundamentally religious phenomenon, but...it was also multi-denominational and included Democrats and Republicans. Its core religious principle was non-violence, and it drew enormous inspiration from Gandhi. It included Jews and Muslims, Catholics and Protestants, atheists and agnostics. And it never, in King's time, became a vehicle for one political party to win elections."

There's a great deal of confusion here—the Religious Right is nothing if not multid denominational, for one thing—but also a grain of truth. No religion-infused movement can afford to be used by a political party as a way to gain votes and nothing more. That's

how the Democrats have used the Al Sharpton / Jesse Jackson-era civil rights establishment and, sadly, how the GOP has often used the Religious Right. But this is less of a danger to the nation's self-government than to the integrity of religious witness. When Tom DeLay cloaks himself in the "perfect redeeming love of Jesus Christ" to brush off charges of corruption, it's not the separation of church and state that's in danger but DeLay's own Christian faith. When preachers echo GOP talking points rather than shape them, they risk going down the same path trod by the liberal clerics of the 1960s, whose sermons became indistinguishable from the gospel according to the *New York Times*—until, as David Frum once put it, their parishioners began to wonder "why they should spend a Sunday morning listening to the same editorial twice?"

But any idealistic movement has to risk such compromises if it intends to leave the mountaintop and make a difference in the valley below. It's telling that the obvious alternative, the purer-than-thou Christian quietism suggested, at times, by writers like Balmer and Wills, was often urged on believers by segregationist clerics in the civil rights-era South. The realities of politics don't necessarily make for the most Christlike displays: "I've got all my votes, and I've got a suitcase," Martin Luther King Sr. remarked after John F. Kennedy helped get his son released from jail, "and I'm going to take them up there and dump them in his lap." But every moral crusade in American history has ultimately become intertwined with one or both of the political parties—because political parties are how movements get things done.

As for why the Religious Right has become so tightly bound to the GOP, rather than becoming as Democratic as the Populists once were, or as bipartisan as the civil rights movement was (albeit ever so briefly)—well, that's a question that the anti-theocrats rarely address in any detail, beyond dark references to the nefarious activities of Karl Rove. Only Phillips has the honesty to analyze the political trends that have brought about this supposedly theocratic moment—and he does so with almost charming obliviousness, quoting experts such as John Green, Geoffrey Layman, and Louis Bolce, as if unaware that their arguments vitiate his thesis.

What all these observers point out, and what the anti-theocrats ignore, is that the religious polarization of American politics runs in both directions. The Republican party has become more religious because the Democrats became self-consciously secular, and the turning point wasn't the 1992 or the 2000 elections but the putsch of 1972, when secularist delegates—to quote Phillips, quoting Layman—suddenly "consti-

tuted the largest 'religious' bloc among Democratic delegates." Yet having noted this rather significant fact, Phillips sets it aside and returns blithely to his preferred narrative, which is the transformation of the GOP into America's first "religious party." But that's not what happened at all—or rather, it's the second half of the story, the Republican reaction against the Democrats' decision to become the first major party in American history to pander to a sizable bloc of aggressively secular voters.

This was very much a strategic electoral move on their part. As Mark Stricherz pointed out last year in a *Commonweal* essay titled "Goodbye Catholics," Democrats in the McGovern era were faced with the crack-up of the old New Deal coalition and made a conscious decision to jettison blue-collar voters in favor of what a 1969 memo called "a different political and social group with rising educational levels, affluence, and . . . greater cultural sophistication." At the time, pursuing a coalition of younger voters, minorities, and affluent suburbanites seemed a better bet than trying to hang on to socially conservative voters, especially given that all the energy in the party seemed to be coming from the Left. But it required the Democrats to identify with a segment of the population—self-identified secularists and nonbelievers—that has grown rapidly over the past three decades and grown more assertive along the way. Which in turn has alienated the devout plurality of Americans and left the Democratic party stuck just shy of majority status for the better part of a generation.

So the rise of the Religious Right, and the growing "religion gap" that Phillips describes but fails to understand, aren't new things in American history but a reaction to a new thing: to an old political party newly dependent on a bloc of voters who reject the role that religion has traditionally played in American political life. The hysteria over theocracy, in turn, represents an attempt to rewrite the history of the United States to suit these voters' prejudices, by setting a year zero somewhere around 1970 and casting everything that's happened since as a battle between progress and atavism, reason and fundamentalism, the Enlightenment and the medieval dark.

The tragedy is that so many religious people have gone along with this revisionism—out of sympathy for the lifestyle liberalism of the secular Left, or out of disdain for the crudity and anti-intellectualism of some religious conservatives, or out of embarrassment in the face of a culture that sneers at anyone who takes their faith too seriously. In the process, they have become everything they claim to oppose: bigoted and hysterical, apocalyptic and self-

righteous. What's worse, they have corrupted themselves for the sake of a politics that cares nothing for their faith—that would tame it to suit the needs of secular society or do away with it entirely.

Garry Wills is half-right: There is no *single* Christian politics, and no movement can claim to have arrived at the perfect marriage of religious faith and political action. Christianity is too otherworldly for that, and the world too fallen. But this doesn't free believers from the obligation to strive in political affairs, as they strive in all things, to do what God would have them do. And the moments when God's will is inscrutable,

or glimpsed only through a glass, darkly, are the moments when good-faith arguments between believers ought to bear the greatest fruit.

In today's America, these arguments are constantly taking place—over issues ranging from abortion to foreign policy; over the potential, and potential limits, of interfaith cooperation; over the past and future of the Religious Right. But they are increasingly drowned out by cries of “theocracy, theocracy, theocracy” and by a zeal, among ostensibly religious intellectuals, to read their fellow believers out of public life and sell their birthright for the blessing of the *New York Times*. FT

Songs of the Soul in Intimate Amorous Communion with God

O love, you living flame
who wound with tender fire
my very soul, down to its depths descending!
No longer hushed by shame,
come now, to your desire;
sunder the veil that parts for sweet befriending.

O soft subjection!
O wound that joys beget!
O gentle hand! O touch with pleasures rife
that hints at resurrection
and ransoms every debt!
You have done death to death, and made it life.

O fiery lamps ignited—
whose bright resplendent gleams
light those deep caverns where the mind, in hiding,
dwelt blind and all benighted—
your dazzling radiance streams
warm rays on the beloved there abiding!

How tenderly you love me
and conjure in my breast—
that secret place where you alone are treasured—
how—your sweet breath above me—
by heaven's good possessed—
with what rare lover's skill have I been pleased!

St. John of the Cross, translated by Rhina P. Espaillat

The Orthodox Imperative

Avery Cardinal Dulles

The word *orthodox* derives from the Greek word *orthodoxía*, which standard dictionaries translate as “right opinion.” Aristotle used the verb *orthodoxein* with the meaning “to have a right opinion.” The Greek-speaking Church Fathers continued to use *orthódoxos* in relation to faith, with the meaning “having right belief.”

During the patristic age, *orthodoxy* gradually took on a further connotation: conformity with the traditional and universal teaching of the Church. This development rested on the conviction that the Church is, as Paul puts it, the “pillar and bulwark of truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). From the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian, Catholic Christians were confident that the Church’s teaching stood in continuity with that of the apostles, who had received it immediately from Christ and the Holy Spirit. Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* frequently uses *orthodoxy* in contrast to *heresy*. Similarly, Augustine writes in *On True Religion*: “Religion is to be sought . . . only among those who are called Catholic or orthodox Christians, that is, guardians of truth and followers of right.”

While some in recent years have suggested orthodoxy means “right worship,” it is clear that from the beginning the Church meant by orthodoxy holding to the truth of revelation. The importance of orthodoxy in this sense is self-evident: Everyone by nature wants to know; the human mind craves truth. Particularly desirable is the truth of revelation, which comes from God and leads to saving union with him. Religious beliefs are right or wrong to the extent that they agree or disagree with the word of God.

The value of orthodoxy in its second sense—conformity with Church teaching—should also be clear. As Cardinal Newman observed, we cannot imagine that God would bestow a revelation without making provision for its preservation. The scriptures tell us that

he entrusted it to the Church as its custodian and herald. By remaining with the apostolic leadership to the end of time (Matt. 28:20), he protected the Church from succumbing to error. To authenticate her doctrine, the Church needs to have a body of accredited teachers, and the faithful must accept the teaching of their appointed leaders.

Jesus said of himself, “I came to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37), and before leaving this world he assured his disciples that he would send from the Father “the Spirit of truth,” who would be with them forever (John 14:16), guiding them into all truth (John 16:13). As the Father had sent him, he sent the apostles into the world as his representatives (John 20:21). They would be the bearers of his message to such a degree that to hear them would be to hear him (Luke 10:16). Jesus is quoted as saying that those who refuse to hear the Church should be treated as Gentiles and tax collectors, that is to say, as nonbelievers (Matt. 18:17). The Christian message therefore transmits itself through authorized witnesses, who are commissioned to speak in the name of the Lord.

St. Paul, who received the grace of apostleship after the Ascension of Jesus, was able to tell the Thessalonians, “We also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thess. 2:13). For Paul, his oral teaching and his written letters stand on the same level of authority: “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thess. 2:15). Since the gospel first came to certain chosen witnesses by way of revelation, it must be accepted on their testimony.

In the New Testament, we see Paul passing on the doctrines of the Eucharist and of the Resurrection that he has received from the earliest Christian community (1 Cor. 11:23 and 15:3). He expects the members of the community, instructed in the apostolic faith, to “be

AVERY CARDINAL DULLES, S.J., holds the Laurence J. McGinley Chair in Religion and Society at Fordham University.

united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10) and to avoid schisms. The Book of Acts shows the apostles reporting on their experiences and settling their differences at meetings such as the Council of Jerusalem.

The preservation of orthodoxy has always required vigorous oversight. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus against perverse teachers, whom he compared to ravenous wolves (Acts 20:29-30). Writing to the Galatians, he anathematized those who would teach "a different gospel" than the one he had proclaimed (Gal. 1:6-18). In his pastoral letters, Paul instructs Titus to appoint in each town of Crete elders who could teach with authority, confuting those who contradict the faith (Titus 1:5, 9). He admonishes Timothy in Ephesus: "Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit" (2 Tim. 1:13-14). He exhorts Timothy to protect the flock against godless heretics, who have "swerved from the truth" (2 Tim. 2:18).

Concern for orthodoxy is not peculiar to Paul. Peter in his second letter predicts that false teachers will arise and "secretly bring in destructive heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). The Second Letter of John admonishes the community to abide in the holy doctrine of Christ and not even to greet those who fail to adhere to it (2 John 9-11). The Book of Revelation warns against the false teaching of the Nicolaitans, which was infecting some of the Christians at Pergamon (Rev. 2:15).

By the close of the first century, the bishops of the apostolic Church, ordained in the apostolic succession, were recognized as the custodians of the faith. In the second century, Irenaeus and Tertullian speak of the "canon of truth" or the "rule of faith." It comes down from the apostles and is decisive for settling disputes about the contents of revelation. The summary rule of faith communicated to neophytes, as recorded by Irenaeus and Tertullian, is very similar to the baptismal creeds of the next few centuries.

The history of early Christianity could be described with little exaggeration as a constant struggle against heresy. Bishops met in council after council to protect the true faith from being overridden by human opinions and speculations. The councils hammered out the great doctrines of the Trinity and Christology in opposition to the heresies of the time. Theology was born and grew in this context. Irenaeus in his *Adversus Haereses* produced the first great work of systematic theology. St. John Damascene in his *The Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* brings the patristic age to a majestic close.

Christians of later centuries owe an immense debt of gratitude to the vigilance of the Fathers and their heroic labors to preserve doctrinal purity in the

Church. Purity of doctrine is the condition sine qua non of right worship and of fruitful ministry.

The question of orthodoxy always comes to the fore in times of crisis, when the integrity of faith is being threatened. One such period in the West was the sixteenth century, when Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and others drew up lengthy confessions to defend their respective flocks against the errors they attributed to rival groups. Councils such as those of Trent, in the sixteenth century, and Vatican I, in the nineteenth, were convoked to condemn errors prevalent in their day.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church had become less defensive. The Second Vatican Council, convened at a moment of relative tranquility, saw no need to issue new condemnations. The council fathers presumed that the vast majority of Catholics were orthodox in their beliefs and did not need to be admonished by new censures. Instead of concentrating on the denunciation of error, as most other councils had done, Vatican II sought to present Catholic teaching in a serene and appealing light and to address new questions in a constructive manner. But the respite was only temporary. Before the council came to a close, many Catholics were misinterpreting it as an invitation to question nearly every doctrine of the Church. Thus the struggle for orthodoxy had to be resumed.

In the past, Christians have held orthodoxy in high esteem, even while sometimes disagreeing about what doctrines are true and sound. But the case is quite different today. The *idea* of orthodoxy has become suspect, and many consider that it is bound up with an authoritarian and fundamentalist mentality unsuited to the modern age.

So, for example, in the school of thought exemplified by the Protestant systematician Paul Tillich, revelation does not convey information or ordinary knowledge. It is a mystical encounter that cannot be expressed in propositions. "Ordinary language," he writes, "is not a medium of revelation." For Tillich, there is no such thing as revealed information, nor are there any revealed doctrines. Religious statements have truth value only to the extent that they are expressive of, and conducive to, an ecstatic experience of the divine. To believe in propositional truths as matters of faith would, for Tillich, be a form of idolatry. We could almost say that, in his estimation, orthodoxy is a heresy. No dogma or creed can be accepted as a revealed truth.

As an argument in favor of his own position, Tillich claims that it precludes any possibility of a collision between science and faith or between history and faith. For him, apparently, it would make no difference for faith if historians could establish that Jesus never

existed or never rose from the dead. The doctrine of the Resurrection, he would say, does not describe a factual or historical event. For the faithful, it can mean only the victory of Christ over the ultimate consequence of the existential estrangement to which he subjected himself.

We may agree with this school that revelation is not in the first instance propositional. It comes predominantly through historical events, interpreted in the light of faith. Still, these events are facts that can be described in words. The Scriptures and the creeds testify to certain essential facts: that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, rose from the dead, and sent the Holy Spirit upon the community of believers. These and other events, committed to language, belong to the Christian creeds and are inseparable from Christian faith.

A non-propositional understanding of revelation contradicts the tenor of Holy Scripture and the earliest confessions of faith, which describe particular historical events of crucial importance for faith. "If Christ has not been raised," writes Paul, "then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Later creeds incorporate articles of faith expressing truths of a more theoretical kind, such as the dogmas that there are three divine persons and that the Second Person became incarnate. These doctrines are not mere metaphors. They must be held and confessed according to their proper meaning. Their significance, no doubt, is most fully brought home in situations of prayer and worship, but such a richer understanding presupposes that the doctrines are factually true. It is unacceptable to say that revelation does not contain any factual information. Anyone who denies that the events of salvation history truly occurred would be contradicting the faith.

A second line of objection, very widespread in our time, may be called relativism. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of "the dictatorship of relativism" in a homily delivered on the day he entered the conclave in April 2005. Relativism takes two forms: historical and cultural.

Historical relativism was one of the driving forces behind the Modernist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Alfred Loisy, one of the leaders of that movement, held that propositions are always conditioned by the circumstances in which they are uttered. When first uttered, he granted, they were true because they corresponded to the religious consciousness of the time. But at the price of becoming false, they must submit to revision. The creeds and dogmatic definitions, Loisy contended, must be continually updated and transformed to keep pace with human progress and to meet the emergent needs of thought and knowledge.

Loisy and his associates were quite properly condemned by Church authorities, but their position contained a grain of truth. The dogmatic formulations of the Church, we may concede, bear the signature of the age in which they are composed.

To communicate the revealed truth, the Church uses the concepts and language that are available in the culture. She has no other conceptual and linguistic tools for making herself understood. Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council therefore recognized that doctrine, while remaining certain and unchangeable in itself, "has to be explored and presented in a way that is demanded by our times. One thing is the deposit of faith, which consists of the truths contained in sacred doctrine; another thing is the manner of presentation, always however with the same meaning and signification." In adding this last phrase, the pope made it clear that he was not accepting the idea that truth changes with the times.

The reinterpretation of dogma is a delicate business, fraught with perils of diminishing or adulterating the deposit of faith. But as John Henry Newman demonstrated in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, new articulations of the faith, while replacing older ones, never deny what was previously held but build on it while advancing in clarity and completeness. Doctrines that reverse and contradict the earlier teachings from which they sprang could not be anything but corruptions. One mark of true development, for Newman, is its tendency to conserve past teaching.

The other form of relativism, cultural relativism, claims that what we perceive as truth is inevitably a function of our own culture. Thus, for example, the Protestant philosopher of religion Ernst Troeltsch, before his death in 1923, came to the conclusion that, although God's revelation in Christ was final and unconditional for Westerners, it was possible for people in other cultures to experience the divine in altogether different ways that were valid for them. Each religion can therefore have its own system of dogmas, reflecting the adherents' own religious experience. The Christian dogmas, valid though they be for Christians, are not for export to other cultural spheres.

To relativism in both its forms we must reply that any dogmatic assertion—for example, the doctrine that God is tripersonal or that the Second Person of the Trinity became man for the sake of our redemption—is objectively either true or false. It cannot be true for the people of one culture and false for those of another. Truth by its nature is universal and permanent. If a statement is true at any time and place, it must be true always and everywhere. This principle of universalism holds for all truth, whether scientific, historical, metaphysical, or religious.

Cultural factors can, of course, color people's perception of the truth or prevent them from recognizing what others can see. Some might be incapable of recognizing that the earth is round, but such difficulties do not affect the truth of the statement. So likewise, some might be wedded to an idea of God that would exclude the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. But cultural limitations are not insuperable, and they do not affect the *truth* of the doctrine that they cloak. Every culture can enrich and purify itself by learning to appreciate the truths and values carried in other cultures.

A third line of objection against dogma comes from the philosophical liberalism associated with such thinkers as Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer, and Alfred North Whitehead. They object to dogmatism because it treats as certain what is not really knowable. Many Americans, influenced by this school of thought, hold that religion is more a matter of the heart than of the head.

This objection rests on the agnostic view that truth and certitude about transcendent matters are unattainable—a view that must be vigorously challenged on philosophical and theological grounds. God is knowable to a limited extent by means of reason. Divine revelation, properly authenticated, can give sure knowledge of things beyond the limits of human inquiry. His word, conveyed by the testimony of the believing Church and impressed on the heart by grace, can impart convictions of unshakable firmness, as shown by the armies of martyrs and confessors who have been constant under persecution.

A fourth objection to orthodoxy is the notion that firm convictions lead to intolerance. History, it is said, demonstrates that believers have used the power of the state to force people to adhere to the established religion.

We may concede that the Church's historical record is blemished. But Vatican II, in its Declaration on Religious Freedom, made it clear that the assent of faith must always be free and no earthly power should seek to coerce it. As John Paul II later put it: "The Church proposes; she imposes nothing. Far from being averse to human freedom, the Church hopes that authentic religious freedom will be granted to all peoples everywhere."

Tolerance should not be an obstacle to evangelization. Without exercising any coercion, the Church can confidently bear witness to the message entrusted to her. In so doing, she helps to liberate people from error. In the words of Jesus, "The truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

A fifth objection to orthodoxy is prevalent in America today: individualism. Maturity is thought to

exclude reliance on authority in religion. People are encouraged to be their own masters, believing what their own experience tells them. Conformity is considered to be dull; dissent, interesting. Heresy is even promoted by books with titles such as *The Heretical Imperative* (Peter Berger), which suggest we ought to prefer our private judgment to the tradition of the Church. It seems more honest and more courageous to speak for oneself rather than to take refuge in the faith of the Church.

In assessing this view, we should recall that the mind is not given to us for the purpose of self-assertion. As an organ of truth, it is intended to conform itself to what is real. Certain religious truths must be accepted on authority or else remain unknown. The decision to submit to authority in a given matter can be mature and responsible, especially because the authority of Christ and the Church in no way contradicts reason but perfects it.

The glorification of dissent, in a curious way, lends support to orthodoxy. When dissent becomes the rule, orthodoxy is another form of dissent. It sometimes takes more courage to uphold unpopular teachings of the Church than to join the chorus of dissenters. Thus, in his book *Orthodoxy*, G.K. Chesterton takes delight in showing how he discovered an exciting new heresy of his own: orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy, like most good things, can be carried to a fault. I do not mean that one's doctrine can be too sound but only that one can be excessively preoccupied with keeping the rules.

One danger is formalism. People who are overly concerned with conforming to authority run the risk of losing interest in the contents of the faith. They speak as though it were enough to say, "I believe whatever the Church teaches, and I don't care what it is," or "Since the Church teaches that there are three persons in God, I believe it, but I would be just as glad if she told me that there are four or five divine persons." Revelation is neither a puzzle nor a body of useless information. It is given to enlighten our minds. Like good food, it is to be savored, digested, and assimilated. The guidance of authority enables us to see more, not less, than we could without it. By engaging in contemplation, prayer, and worship, Christians are enabled to grow in personal familiarity with the God of revelation and to express the content of faith in new and powerful language.

A second danger is superficiality. Because the faith is much richer than the propositions of dogma, orthodoxy does not give us the fullness of truth. A robust faith grounds itself not only in the word of the Church but more profoundly in the word and deeds of God, as attested by Scripture and apostolic tradition. The word

of the Church is intended to guide us in interpreting the sources. It points ultimately to the one source: the person of the divine Word, who is in himself the fullness of revelation.

Pius XII instructed theologians to return constantly to the sources of Holy Scripture and apostolic tradition. These sources, he said, "contain so many rich treasures of truth that they can really never be exhausted. Hence it is that theology through the study of its sacred sources remains ever fresh; on the other hand, speculation that neglects a deeper search into the deposit of faith proves sterile, as we know from experience."

A final danger of orthodoxy is dogmatism. In their excess of zeal, some want to settle every question by authority and point fingers of suspicion against anyone who raises questions and engages in speculation. Many

questions in theology are still open; relatively few have been definitively settled. While we should not minimize the force of doctrinal pronouncements, we should not exaggerate them either. Not every statement that comes from the lips of the pope, a curial official, or a bishop is final and absolute.

Fortunately, none of these faults belongs to orthodoxy by nature. At its best, orthodoxy is warm, genial, and beneficent. Perhaps we could best define it as a loving adherence to the word of God in its fullness, with all its complexities, paradoxes, and mysteries. Chesterton taught his readers to see orthodoxy as a romance, full of surprises for those who explore it. Forbidding though it may be in its outward appearances, it gives rise to joy and fascination when experienced from within. Orthodoxy would have a brilliant future if it were represented with a more cheerful face. FT

Eve Names the Kiss

He sat upon the garden wall.
She had her fingers on his knees.
The smallest leaves began to fall.
A subtle difference in the breeze

Prompted the tiger and the hare
to linger there. Even the snake
slithered closer so to hear
what sound she'd make. They'd heard him speak

a thousand times, define the world
from bumblebee to elephant.
His syllables were muscled, bold.
But she, they felt, was different.

The future trembled on her lips.
Her mouth was like an apple split,
two halves as supple as her hips.
And when she said the word, he bit.

Gwen Hart

Lincoln

Both Great and Good

James Nuechterlein

Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness

by Joshua Wolf Shenk
Houghton Mifflin, 368 pages, \$25

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

by Doris Kearns Goodwin
Simon & Schuster, 944 pages, \$35

Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power

by Richard Carwardine
Knopf, 416 pages, \$27.50

We know as much about Abraham Lincoln as we know about anyone in the nation's past. As long ago as 1934, the Lincoln biographer James G. Randall asked historians to consider whether the sixteenth president had been exhausted as a historical subject. Yet all this time and literature later, he remains, as he has always been, something of a mystery to us, a figure of reverence, to be sure, but for that very reason sealed off from our understanding regardless of the knowledge we have piled up.

The contrast with George Washington is instructive. Many Americans view Washington with something close to the respect and significance they afford Lincoln, but they do not revere him. I suspect that my personal experience is not atypical. I have visited the Washington Monument and toured Mount Vernon. At neither place did I respond with anything like the sense of awe that I felt at my first visit to the Lincoln Memorial. That difference is not simply a matter of aesthetic response; Lincoln is in a different category from all other figures in our past. Even those who most firmly resist the temptations of political religion find it hard to hold the line at Lincoln, and they similarly find it hard to maintain historical and analytical distance in evaluating him.

Lincoln's hold on us has to do first, of course, with historical contingency. He was president during our

greatest national crisis and by that accidental fact guaranteed a commanding place in our history. Above all, there are the circumstances of his death at his moment of triumph in April 1865. The man who had preserved the Union and, in ending slavery, purged the nation of its great original sin was, on a Good Friday, martyred by an assassin's bullet. The redeemer president of a redeemer nation passed instantly into mythology. In *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power*, Richard Carwardine notes that, even at the time of his death, a contemporary journalist sensed at once the implications: "It has made it impossible to speak the truth of Abraham Lincoln hereafter."

Adding to that impediment to truth is pious overfamiliarity. Who can listen to a recitation of the Gettysburg Address, for example, and actually have its message register? We hear the words—many older Americans memorized them in school—but they sweep over us unabsorbed.

All that said, Lincoln is not entirely opaque to us. He is a national icon, but even icons can, with effort, be kept in focus and maintained in human proportion. There has, in fact, been a resurgence in Lincoln scholarship in recent years, and what makes this resurgence especially welcome is that it is accessible not only to experts. Serious thinkers are writing biographies again, and people are reading them again—and the best of recent biographical treatments of Lincoln rescue the insights of narrowly focused scholars and incorpo-

JAMES NUECHTERLEIN is the former editor of *FIRST THINGS* and a senior fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.

rate them into the larger story of Lincoln's extraordinary life and times.

The narrowest of recent books about the sixteenth president is Joshua Wolf Shenk's *Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness*. It is, in essence, a long article turned into a short book by the author's ingenious, if not finally persuasive, effort to make Lincoln's depressive psychology the key to his life.

We know that Lincoln had two major depressive episodes, both occurring when he was a relatively young man. The first came in 1835, when he was twenty-six, and was somehow related (just how closely is not clear) to the death of Ann Rutledge, an acquaintance with whom he may or may not have been in love. The evidence on the matter is sketchy, but it seems clear that Lincoln fell into a prolonged depression deep enough to include thoughts of suicide.

The second episode came in the winter of 1840–1841, and the triggering events are uncertain. Lincoln's courtship of Mary Todd had been temporarily disrupted, and his political fortunes in the Illinois legislature were at a low ebb. Whatever the causes, Lincoln again went into a deep funk, one so severe that associates saw to it that knives and other sharp instruments were kept out of reach. As he wrote to a friend: "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth."

In time, the depression passed, and nothing so severe ever recurred. But, Shenk argues, Lincoln remained a deeply melancholy man, and Shenk traces a depressive inclination throughout Lincoln's career, claiming that it shaped him at every step of the way. Shenk's general model for doing so—a pattern in Lincoln's development of "fear, engagement, and transcendence"—strikes me as too abstract to be of much help, and he lapses into identifying episodes of normal disappointment or unhappiness as signs of clinical depression. But he does make some suggestive observations concerning what one might call Lincoln's process of sublimation.

Lincoln was always an ambitious man, and his depression, Shenk indicates, focused his energies not on personal fulfillment, which he sensed was closed to him, but on public engagement. He confessed to a friend during the 1840 episode that a deterrent to suicide was his dream of leaving his mark on his generation in some significant contribution to the common good. Lincoln's melancholy also served as a kind of reality principle. In contrast to the typical American optimism of his times, Shenk argues, "Lincoln saw the world as a deeply flawed, even tragic, place where imperfect people had to make the best of poor materials." Such philosophical

conservatism (though Shenk does not call it that) kept Lincoln in close touch with political realism throughout his career.

But this grants too much. Neither the precise nature of Lincoln's ambition nor his unilluminated view of human nature requires a diagnosis of depression for explanation. They could easily stand apart. One who thinks so is Doris Kearns Goodwin in her *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. She and Shenk apparently wrote without knowledge of the other's work (they published at roughly the same time and without bibliographical reference to each other), but she directly refutes the argument he makes.

At the outset of her research, she says, "I had assumed that Lincoln suffered from chronic depression." But along the way she changed her mind. She acknowledges the depressive incidents, as well as Lincoln's characteristic sorrowful countenance and the frequent remarks of his contemporaries as to his air of sadness, but in the end she distinguishes what Shenk conflates: melancholy and depression. Lincoln had a melancholy disposition, she concludes, but he was not a depressive personality. After his youthful episodes, he simply operated at too high a level of continuing purpose, functioning good spirits, and success—in the midst of incredible public and private pressures—to be understood usefully in terms of psychological infirmity, even transcended infirmity. Shenk, to be fair, is nuanced and non-reductive in his analysis, but Goodwin seems to me more successful in placing Lincoln in a plausible psychological context.

Goodwin's context, in any case, extends far beyond Lincoln's personal psychology—beyond, in part, Lincoln himself. In *Team of Rivals*, Goodwin makes the case for her subject's political wisdom by demonstrating his deft management and control of his cabinet. The first part of the book traces Lincoln's pre-presidential career but puts a fresh face on it by viewing it in tandem with the careers of his three chief rivals for the Republican nomination in 1860: William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and Edward Bates, all of whom became members of Lincoln's administration.

Goodwin manages this exercise in parallel biography with considerable skill. Lincoln's rivals and future colleagues emerge as figures in their own right, not merely as foils to the main character. Taken together, their stories give readers a good sense of the dynamics of political ambition and upward mobility in mid-nineteenth-century America. For the period after 1860, Goodwin keeps us in touch with Seward, Chase, and Bates, and manages, while focusing more conventionally on the president, to offer as well shrewd portraits of

his other major cabinet members, Edwin M. Stanton, Gideon Welles, and Montgomery Blair. *Team of Rivals* alternates without strain between the public and the private, and it wears its broad learning lightly. Goodwin has accomplished the not inconsiderable task of appealing to scholars and the general public alike; her book was a runaway bestseller and awarded the prestigious Lincoln Prize for 2006.

Richard Carwardine's *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* is also a Lincoln Prize winner. (It won in 2004 after publication in Great Britain the previous year; the slightly revised American edition came out in 2006.) This is a more conventional book than Goodwin's, but it is not (with one significant reservation) inferior to it. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a better introduction to Lincoln's political career, and the context in which it occurred, than what Carwardine, Rhodes professor of American history at Oxford University, has produced. This is concise political biography at its best, marked by impeccable scholarship, broad understanding, crisp prose, and perceptive judgment. It is not geared to be a bestseller, but scholars, and discerning general readers, will recognize its excellence.

Carwardine effectively summarizes and integrates into his analytical narrative the findings of other historians, but his is not simply a work of synthesis or even of fresh takes on existing knowledge. He has written earlier on religion and politics in antebellum America, and he provides a vivid account of the centrality of evangelical Protestantism, both theologically and institutionally, to the antislavery and, later, Unionist causes to which Lincoln dedicated his life. In recent decades, the political history of the United States has been rewritten to emphasize the role of ethno-religious factors, and Carwardine's book participates in that rewriting.

The role of religion in Lincoln's own life is, as Carwardine notes, a considerable puzzle. He was not himself an evangelical Protestant; indeed, he may not have been, in an orthodox sense, a Christian at all. He rejected his parents' hard-shell Baptist faith and was, as a young adult in New Salem, Illinois, something of a village atheist. He never denied the existence of a remote creator God, but he did reject, as Shenk notes, standard Protestant notions of "eternal damnation, innate sin, the divinity of Jesus, and the infallibility of the Bible." He never publicly expressed Trinitarian faith and he seems not to have believed in an afterlife.

Yet it is also the case that the trajectory of Lincoln's religious life moved in the direction of affirmation; what Allen Guelzo (another Lincoln Prize winner) summarizes in his superb *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (1999) as a "Calvinized deism" edged, by the end

of Lincoln's life, toward an openness to, if not precise discernment of, divine purpose.

The young Lincoln was a fatalist who perceived God as, at most, a distant designer revealed only through the mechanical and deterministic operations of natural law. He held to a "doctrine of necessity" that denied free will. The Lincoln of the war years, however, saturated his speeches in the language of a providence that, however finally inscrutable, was active in history and that made room for purposive human behavior. "We must work earnestly in the best light He gives us," Lincoln concluded, "trusting that so working . . . conduces to the great ends He ordains."

Whether by the end of his life Lincoln had arrived at some semblance of orthodox faith cannot be known. Shenk, reflecting the scholarly consensus, is doubtful. "He visited, but he didn't move in," Shenk says of Lincoln's relation to Christianity. Perhaps so, but his increasingly frequent comments during the White House years of reliance on divine favor suggest an emerging spiritual sensibility, however uncertain its precise nature.

If Lincoln was heterodox and atypical in his religious views, he was thoroughly representative in politics, economics, and culture. His life was the bourgeois American Dream made manifest. Lincoln's origins were about as undistinguished as could be imagined; opponents referred to his "poor white trash" background. His father, Thomas Lincoln, barely scraped out a subsistence existence on the land, and the son was determined to escape rural poverty. Lincoln was a great admirer of the Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence, but he had little patience for the Jeffersonian dream of America as a land of self-sufficient farmers. There was nothing in him of romantic agrarianism.

He was, in fact, before the birth of the Republican party in the 1850s, a Hamiltonian Whig: a proponent of the market economy and of an urban, industrial society. He believed in individualism, self-help, and social mobility, and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* was an early inspiration. Lincoln's philosophy was, in brief, that of self-interest, rightly understood. The Whigs were the party of self-improvement and middle-class triumphalism, unashamed of prosperity and committed far more to economic expansion than to economic equality. They supported policies—a national bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvements—directed to economic development and they defined themselves, in no small part, against Andrew Jackson's assault on economic elites. Lincoln, whose political heroes were Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, took pride in the modest prosperity he came to enjoy.

But the Whig ethic of self-reliance that he embraced was thoroughly democratic, meritocratic, and encompassing in its program of political economy. Mass prosperity and mass democracy were mutually reinforcing. We admire the rhetorical resonances of the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural, but one perhaps better gets at the heart of Lincoln's democratic faith in the homely words he addressed to Union veterans toward the end of the war. "I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this that the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright."

Lincoln's antislavery sentiments coincided with his Whig predilections. They began, to be sure, in simple moral conviction. As he wrote in 1864, he had believed for as long as he could remember that "if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." But, as Carwardine notes, his sense of economic justice reinforced that primal moral instinct: "Slavery stifled individual enterprise, discouraged self-discipline, and sustained a fundamental inequality; depriving human beings of the just rewards of their labor."

Lincoln had to proceed with political delicacy on questions of slavery and race. Antislavery sentiments were widespread in the North; more widespread were notions of white supremacy. Whites opposed slavery in their states and in the remaining territories to the west. They did not want to have to compete against slave labor, and most of them did not want contact with black people at all. Lincoln's home state of Illinois barred blacks from taking up residence and, like most northern states, had a series of laws that, as Goodwin summarizes, prevented those already there "from voting, holding political office, giving testimony against whites, and sitting on juries." Lincoln's greatest liability in his 1858 race for the U.S. Senate against the Democrat Stephen Douglas was the suspicion that he was, as Douglas insisted, a racial egalitarian.

As with religion, Lincoln's personal views on race are impossible to define precisely. They were, it is safe to say, retrograde by our lights, but highly advanced, even radical, by standards of the time. He denied belief in social and political equality. But he also insisted that the black man, "in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man."

More controversially, he insisted that in speaking of equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the promulgators of the Declaration of Independence "meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere." Or with more particularity: "Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position. . . . Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal."

The Founders, Lincoln believed, acting on the principles of the Declaration, had meant to set slavery on the road to extinction. That process had been frustrated by political measures (the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854) and judicial opinions (the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857) that reopened what had been earlier foreclosed: the extension of slavery to the western territories.

That slavery was wrong was, to Lincoln, obvious; what to do about it was an intractable difficulty. He frankly confessed that even if given autocratic powers, he would not know how properly to deal with it. Recognizing that his own relatively enlightened views on race went against the national grain, Lincoln came to the reluctant conclusion that blacks and whites in America could not live together in amity. Thus his despairing solution for an apparently insoluble dilemma: Black slaves should gradually be manumitted (with compensation to their owners) and then, along with free people of color, colonized elsewhere. The policy never made sense. All other objections aside, Lincoln's own humane insistence that it be voluntary made it a nullity. The great majority of blacks in America, slave or free, had no desire to return to Africa or find some other foreign place of residence.

Lincoln's support for colonization, however puzzling to us today, had broad appeal among people of goodwill at the time who clung to the policy for lack of a decent alternative. Lincoln took a place of leadership in the antislavery cause (which was always assertively non-abolitionist) by, as Carwardine summarizes, his principled but prudent set of views: "moral repugnance at the institution, sympathy for the slave, respect for the protection the federal Constitution afforded slavery, commitment to preserving social order, belief in the essential goodwill of the southern slaveholder, and the need for common, gradual action by North and South on a problem for which they shared responsibility." In

that last phrase, and in the impossibility of its finding practical effect, lies the source of the probably unavoidable tragedy of the American Civil War. The dilemma of slavery in America defied solution, and by Lincoln's time it had come to defy further avoidance.

It is difficult to imagine anyone who could have brought more good out of the Civil War—a war that took more American lives than all the rest of the nation's wars combined—than Abraham Lincoln. He continued in the White House the unique combination of moral commitment and pragmatic instinct that had taken him there in the first place. Judgment is everything in politics, and Lincoln's political judgment was superb.

His view of the war evolved with events. At the outset, the war's purpose had simply to do with preservation of the Union, the necessity, in Lincoln's words, "of proving that popular government is not an absurdity." Lincoln and the Republicans held firm against slavery's extension, but they had no intention of extirpating it where it existed. It was secession they held unacceptable, not the South's peculiar institution. Lincoln, of course, hoped and believed that over time slavery would die of its own weight, but in the secession crisis of 1861—where his immediate priority was maintaining the loyalty of the border slave states—he was willing to offer constitutional guarantees that slavery would end only at the will of the slave states themselves. The war, he insisted early on, is "for a great national object, and the Negro has nothing to do with it."

He changed his mind as the conflict developed. When what he had hoped would be a short war turned into a long one, he came to see that slave labor gave the South a significant logistical advantage. He also recognized that those in the North most committed to prosecution of the war were those committed to slavery's demise. Thus his gradual development of an emancipation policy—first as an adjunct to the war effort, eventually as a war end in itself—that finally culminated in the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Along the way, Lincoln skillfully read and adroitly led public opinion, even as he maneuvered carefully between the conservative Republicans and war Democrats committed to the Union but leery of emancipation and the radical Republicans for whom commitment to the Union required an end to slavery.

Most of the time Lincoln tried to lead through consensus and persuasion, but his growing confidence in his own judgment made him, where he considered it necessary, forceful in imposing his will. In discussing with his cabinet his decision for emancipation, he made it clear that he was informing them, not consulting them. At other times, he showed flashes of imperial

insistence. In January 1865 he was two votes short of getting the necessary two-thirds margin in the House of Representatives for passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. His instructions to his vote managers were blunt: "I am president of the United States, clothed with great power. The abolition of slavery by constitutional provision settles the fate, for all coming time, not only of the millions now in bondage, but of unborn millions to come—a measure of such importance that *those two votes must be procured*. I leave it to you to determine how it shall be done; but remember that I am president of the United States, clothed with immense power, and I expect you to procure those votes." The votes were procured.

Lincoln's prosecution of the war displayed the same aggressive instincts. He agonized over the war's savagery but sensed nonetheless that the right strategy was using the North's numerical advantage to crush, even if at terrible cost, the Confederate forces. Carwardine notes his "cold statistical ruthlessness." In the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862, the Union suffered 13,000 casualties, far more than those of Robert E. Lee's army. Even as he grieved over the Union dead, Lincoln contemplated, in his own words, the "awful arithmetic" of the battle's meaning: "If the same battle were to be fought over again, every day, through a week of days, with the same relative results, the army under Lee would be wiped out to its last man, the Army of the Potomac would still be a mighty host, the war would be over, the Confederacy gone." Lincoln's compassion was wreathed in iron will.

That increasingly assured will coincided with the trajectory toward dependence on providence that marked the White House years. Given the war's carnage—a carnage for which he must have felt himself in some sense responsible—it is hardly surprising that Lincoln might look for transcendent affirmation. Scholars rightly note that Lincoln avoided a precise identification of the Union cause with the will of God. He wrote privately that "in the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party," a point made public in the humble recognition of the Second Inaugural that "the Almighty has His own purposes."

But Lincoln never doubted for a moment the moral rightness—and the divine approbation that stood behind it—of the struggle against slavery. If he never unambiguously invoked God in the Union cause, it is certain he would have found unfathomable the idea that God might favor the Confederacy. God's purposes were hidden, but they were not perverse. North and South might share historical guilt for the evils of slavery—and thus might each fall, in undecipherable ways,

under divine judgment—but that judgment could not be evenhanded as to slavery itself. After the battle of Antietam in September 1862, Lincoln announced to his bemused cabinet that the Union victory had sealed a promise he had made to himself and to “my Maker” to consider a favorable outcome there a sign that, on the question of emancipation, “God had decided this question in favor of the slaves.”

All this should not be exaggerated. Lincoln’s theological affirmations remained equivocal, and one senses that he finally felt more at ease in the language of Enlightenment rationalism than in conventional Christian discourse. Nonetheless he participated, even if at a distance, in the melding of the Republican and Union cause with Protestant millennial yearnings. From Republican beginnings in the 1850s, Carwardine notes, Protestant evangelicals—Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists (the Protestant establishment of the time)—went further than their predecessors in “identifying the arrival of God’s kingdom with the success of a particular political party.” Pious Republicans saw their party as the vehicle of “conscience, Calvinistic duty, and social responsibility.” Whatever Lincoln’s shortcomings in orthodox doctrine, Carwardine argues, he often acted as a “Yankee puritan” in political practice.

Republican moralism, it should be noted, had its dark side. Significant elements of the party coalition were involved in nativism and anti-Catholicism. Lincoln was neither anti-Catholic nor anti-foreign, but it is notable that the eloquent anti-nativist sentiments historians so often note (“How can anyone who abhors the oppression of Negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people?”) were expressed in private correspondence. In public he maintained a restrained silence.

The war greatly intensified Protestant millennial impulses. The Union cause got identified with America’s providential role in the realization of God’s kingdom on earth, a cause and role in which political and religious freedom were inextricably intertwined in a transcendent patriotism. Lincoln kept his distance from millennial extravagance—with characteristic nuance he spoke of Americans as God’s “almost-chosen people”—but in sympathetic speeches to religious audiences and in proclaiming days for fasting and thanksgiving, he spoke a language, as Carwardine says, “which persuaded the public that the administration was under the guidance of a man who recognized his dependence on divine favor.”

Lincoln’s accomplished leadership of evangelical opinion—opinion that, in Carwardine’s judgment, “did more than any other single force to mobilize support

for the war”—exemplifies his overall leadership of the Union cause. His rhetorical precision and brilliance were unprecedented, his political and military judgment uncommonly acute. Carwardine describes that leadership in detail and with great acuity, but then, in an odd conclusion, draws back from his own analysis. His subject, he suggests, is not really a great man but one who “earns the label ‘exceptional’ chiefly because of the office he held and the singular circumstances in which he held it.” Lincoln, he goes on, “is best understood not as the extraordinary figure of the iconographers, but as a man of his times, politically wise but capable of misjudgments, too, and powerful largely because he was representative and, as such, deeply familiar with his people and his context.” This is a disappointing dying fall, one Carwardine himself seems not genuinely persuaded of. (A few pages later, in his afterword for the American edition, he speaks of Lincoln as staking “a persuasive claim to being the greatest of the nation’s leaders.”)

Doris Kearns Goodwin displays better judgment. She notes with approval the contemporary observation of the poet James Russell Lowell concerning Lincoln’s “profound common sense.” That phrase gets Lincoln just right, and it does not take an iconographer to recognize it. Lincoln was indeed (religion complicatedly aside) representative of the substantive views of the middle America of his time. But if he embodied he also transcended. He was America made noble. He combined the mundane American Dream with idealism that never degenerated into utopian fantasy. Lincoln held in delicate tension political reality and moral aspiration. And it was his extraordinary practical wisdom, his “profound common sense,” that held it all together. Not to recognize Lincoln’s greatness is to miss the obvious.

Goodwin ventures further. Historians speak sparingly of greatness, rarely of goodness, almost never of the two together. With a kind of ingenuous intellectual boldness, Goodwin makes that connection. Lincoln’s “tough-minded” political skills coincided, she argues, with an “extraordinary array of personal qualities that enabled him to form friendships with men who had previously opposed him; to repair injured feelings that, left untended, might have escalated into permanent hostility; to assume responsibility for the failures of subordinates; to share credit with ease; and to learn from mistakes.” It is notable how often, in the accounts Lincoln’s colleagues left of his treatment of them, the word *magnanimous* occurs.

A great man and a good man: It is appropriate that we hold him in singular regard. It would diminish us not to do so. [FT]

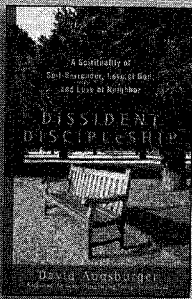
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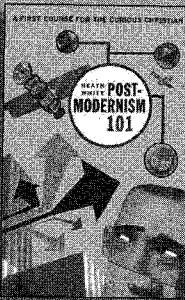
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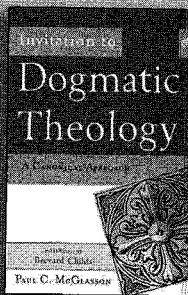
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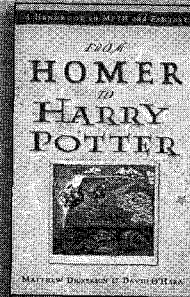
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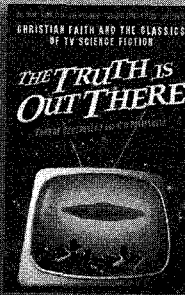
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Behind the Veil

THE FORGOTTEN QUEENS OF ISLAM
by FATIMA MERNISSI
University of Minnesota Press,
229 pages, \$20

JOURNEY OF THE JIHADIST:
INSIDE MUSLIM MILITANCY
by FAWAZ A. GERGES
Harcourt, 320 pages, \$25

THE TROUBLE WITH ISLAM TODAY:
A WAKE-UP CALL FOR HONESTY
AND CHANGE
by IRSHAD MANJI
St. Martin's, 240 pages, \$12.95

ISLAM OUR CHOICE:
PORTRAITS OF MODERN
AMERICAN MUSLIM WOMEN
edited by DEBRA L. DIRKS and
STEPHANIE PARLOVE
Amana, 304 pages, \$14.95

Reviewed by Lauren Weiner

IF THE BATTLE FOR the soul of Islam ends up being won by the moderates, the victory will in no small measure have been secured by women. The

books that Muslim women publish, the films they narrate, and the organizations they run put them in the crosshairs of the jihadists bent on imposing their misogynistic version of Islam on everyone else. Wafa Sultan, a Syrian American psychiatrist living in the United States, is only the latest heroine to come to the attention of Americans, winning accolades for her brave defense of the dignity of women in a near-shouting match with a radical Islamist cleric that was broadcast on Al Jazeera television earlier this year.

The noted Moroccan scholar Fatima Mernissi has been challenging the fundamentalist version of Islam for decades. *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, her historical investigation first published in 1993, came out in a new edition in 2003. Mernissi claims that the Prophet Muhammad's teachings brought to the world a spiritual democracy: It contrasted starkly with the caste system of the Hindus, and it granted explicit rights of religious worship to women. The male religious establishment of succeeding

centuries stripped these elements away, she writes, and effaced many—but not all—traces of the politically powerful women who held sway in sultanates and kingdoms of the Muslim world. She recovers these accounts, and also examines the *hadiths*, or sayings of Muhammad, that assign women a status inferior to that of men. She concludes that some were likely invented after the prophet's death and falsely attributed to him.

Islamists revile such reinterpretation of religious doctrine and history—in fact, they forbid any and all interpretation of the words of God's messenger. Qur'anic law must be made the law of the land without amendment—that is what Fawaz A. Gerges' interviewees told him during his sojourn to Cairo to research *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*. The Middle East Studies

LAUREN WEINER is a writer in Baltimore. She has written about politics, history, and literature for the Wall Street Journal, the New Criterion, and other publications.



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professor at Sarah Lawrence College, a native of Lebanon, has since September 11 offered media commentary that draws fine distinctions between homegrown religious radicals in Iraq and the violent men whom Al Qaeda dispatches to that country or to other flashpoints

around the globe. Some of the intra-Islamist trends and crosscurrents he has identified have had implications for how the United States and its allies can fight the war on terror; others, however, seem to be distinctions without a difference, at least as far as winning that struggle is concerned.

Journey of the Jihadist is centered on recent encounters with Egyptian radicals, most prominently an ideologue named Kamal el-Said Habib. The distinction drawn in the book is between Kamal el-Said Habib as a young holy warrior in the 1970s and Habib now, a veteran of many years of imprisonment in an Egyptian jail. Kamal (as the author familiarly calls him) was part of a movement to Islamicize society by force: He helped plan the 1981 assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. His ten years of being tortured in prison, however, "drained the violence out of him," and he expressed himself chastened by the failure of the jihadist attempt to seize power. He told Gerges of his desire to Islamicize society through political persuasion and religious calling instead of through violent revolution.

On the other hand, Gerges reports, at least two things had *not* changed about Habib and his associates. One was their "powerful longing to make Islam supreme." The other was their view of the role of women in society. The author pressed Habib and the others on the question of "why activists seemed so terrified by female empowerment." One man, an attorney, "simply told me to shut up," writes Gerges.

He observes that many more women nowadays appear in public veiled in places like Beirut, Damascus, and Algiers, and that religious texts flood the bookstores in these previously secular urban settings. Yet he wishes to caution his readers that these signs of increasing religiosity are merely part of a worldwide rise in fervor within all the major religious faiths and that they therefore should not be misinterpreted by Westerners worried about terrorism. These legions of newly pious citizens are, he writes, "socially conservative and do not represent likely candidates for violent forces. One of the major reasons jihadists have failed to bring down the region's military regimes is

Man cannot live without love.

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that they have lacked the support of the Muslim middle class.”

Before breathing a sigh of relief, however, we must note that here is one of those Gerges distinctions that non-Muslims will find overstated. While the jihadists may, as Gerges says, lack support in Beirut, Damascus, and Algiers, they don't lack room to operate in those places. As Irshad Manji is at pains to point out, millions of mainstream Muslims the world over object to the wanton cruelty of bin Ladenism but they seldom express their objections openly. The Canadian television journalist has written *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change* to try to bestir her coreligionists in the decent and peace-loving majority to stand up to—and root out—the violent radicals in their midst.

Manji, born in Uganda to an Egyptian mother and a Pakistani father, immigrated with her family to Canada and took classes at a madressa in the suburbs of Vancouver. To keep one's head down—to negate the individual will for the benefit of the group—was drummed into the madressa students. The lesson didn't seem to take: Her impertinent questions got her kicked out of the school. She attributes her ejection to having soaked up the Canadian atmosphere of open inquiry and tolerance.

Muslims need to stop bowing to the dictates of madressa teachers and mosque leaders, she writes, and to start honoring the intertwined theological heritage of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the People of the Book. She calls the Qur'an a text “so profoundly at war with itself that Muslims who ‘live by the book’ have no choice but to choose what to emphasize and what to downplay.” In contrast to Fatima Mernissi and those writing in the Mernissi vein, Manji insists that “the Quran is not transparently egalitarian for women.” It requires the hard intel-

lectual and spiritual work of *ijtihad*, or interpretation, she says, to reconcile Islam to modernity and rescue the faith from the mindless rigidity of the Islamists.

After the attacks of September 11, the author publicly called for introspection, declaring: “The twin towers

that did deserve to collapse continued to prop up a palatable yet unexamined version of Islam.” One tower was “deceit”—that under peer pressure to keep on telling the world “that we're not all terrorists . . . we reflexively romanticized Islam.” The other was “conceit”—that “Westerners

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owe us basic human respect, but we owe nothing to the Western values that offer us this opportunity for respect."

Besides the passivity ingrained by Islamic training, what also hinders reform is the justified fear of being physically attacked for speaking out. The danger for outspoken Muslims is magnified many times over for

Irshad Manji because she is a lesbian. Being disapproved of—in fact, as she acknowledges, "I've been rejected by the mainstream of Islam"—has only seemed to prompt greater outspokenness. She goes after all the sensitive targets, including the "desert Islam" promoted by Saudi Arabia; the antireligious bigotry of the secular feminists; and the follies of whites

on her side of the political spectrum (the left), who all too often "grovel" before the multicultural imperative to accommodate religious minorities by giving the intolerant ideologues among them a moral pass.

The Arab sections of the book remind one of the writings of the noted Egyptian feminist Leila Ahmed. Ahmed inveighed during the 1990s against the "linguistic and cultural imperialism" of Saudi Arabia and the malign influence of "desert Islam" on a country (Ahmed's native Egypt) that did not even consider itself Arab before the advent of the state of Israel, Gamal Abdel Nasser's ascent to power, and the rise of pan-Arabism.

For Manji, the Saudi imposition of Wahhabi fundamentalism hobbles the Muslim spirit from Pakistan to Poughkeepsie. Within the Saudi kingdom itself, she points out, the combination of Wahhabism and sole economic reliance on petrodollars negates a key to advancement for poor Muslims: the urge to engage in commerce. "Generating wealth is crucial to sustaining any new democracy," she writes, and enabling the women of the Islamic world to become entrepreneurs is one of the main planks of her reformist program. (She advocates the micro-credit model of Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus and the grassroots-capitalist model of Peru's Hernando de Soto.)

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The liberating power of the market, the need to respect the piety and the veiling practices of individual women, and the belief that nation states remain important even in an age of multilateral institutions—it's a combination that makes the author seem like an emanation from the mind of Alexis de Tocqueville. Indeed, while her book does not spare democracy in America, or the Bush administration, from criticism, her admiration for the United States comes through. What Manji particularly values is the recognition here of the moral power of women. An adept comparativist, she homes in on the designation, by *Time* magazine in 2002, of "Persons of the Year" who were whistle-blowing female employees of Enron, WorldCom, and the FBI. "Where in the Muslim world," she asks, "would you find

women being hailed for busting corruption?"

THAT ISLAMISTS ARE dead set against women exerting a moral influence upon men was evident to Fawaz Gerges in his talks with Anwar Sadat's jihadist enemies in Cairo. Gerges notes that "part of their rage against Sadat was focused on his wife, Jihan Sadat." His interviewees be-

lieved that she "had convinced her husband to pass secular legislation and to empower women, violating the most fundamental codes of Islamic morality."

Islam Our Choice: Portraits of Modern American Muslim Women offers evidence, unfortunately, that not every American woman is cut out to be a moral preceptor. Editors Debra L. Dirks and Stephanie

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Parlove have collected the personal essays of six American converts to Islam who tell of lives of rootlessness, loss, dysfunction, and divorce. All have found a home in Islam, and in several cases they've adopted the rigidly orthodox Islam against which Fatima Mernissi and Irshad Manji are doing battle.

Two are Coloradans whose interest in horses led them to encounter Islam on horse-purchasing visits to the Middle East. Mrs. Parlove, who spoke only English, found that "in both Syria and Jordan, people were flexible" and welcoming. She and the other tourists needed help in communicating, and "the Syrian government had sent the most wonderful people on the trip to ensure there were enough interpreters." Her description of the Holy Land includes no mention of Judaism.

Other Pollyannas in the book include the wide-eyed Jennifer Manzoor of Kansas. Mrs. Manzoor is at pains to show her Pakistani husband to be acceptable in American terms (he pitches in around the house), but she seems clueless as to why she is not treated as a first-class Muslim by other women of her mosque who are Arab. A nice Midwestern woman, she is pitifully loath to condemn tribalism when she sees it. She is also loath, as are the other essayists (with one honorable exception), to say much about the events of September 11. The passivity and defensiveness identified by Manji appear to be in full force in America's heartland.

Far be it from us to begrudge spiritual succor to these women—or to anyone else, for that matter. But perhaps it is not amiss to hope that they someday encounter the thought of women with a direct experience of repressive subcultures within Islam. If there is to be a Muslim reformation, and a clearly defined, tolerant Islam becomes the religion's dominant tendency, let it be true that these American women stood up and made a contribution.

It Ain't Me, Babe

**BOB DYLAN: THE ESSENTIAL
INTERVIEWS**
edited by JONATHAN COTT
Wenner, 464 pages, \$23.95

Reviewed by Stephen H. Webb

NO MATTER HOW MANY albums Bob Dylan keeps recording, he will always be an icon of the 1960s. Elvis Presley might have invented rock and roll, but Dylan infused it with a moral seriousness that, for better or worse, gave rock the cultural status it still enjoys to this day. With Elvis in the army and Buddy Holly dead in a

plane crash, rock had degenerated by the end of the 1950s into teenybop-per songs about puppy love. Dylan's surreal lyrics and offbeat diction furnished rock with the pedigree of an art form. Above all, he was both a musical *and* a social revolutionary. He challenged the conservative consensus of the 1950s by giving a unique voice to the radical politics of the 1960s. With songs like "Masters of War," he spoke truth to power, and with songs like "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right," he called for the liberation of personal behavior from traditional moral constraints. He knew the times were changing, and his music led the way.

At least that is what the scholars and journalists who grew up listening to Dylan want you to believe. By dominating the abundant secondary literature about Dylan, the survivors

of the 1960s have a lot invested in the myth of Dylan as a man on the political and cultural Left. But to read the recently published volume *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews* is to realize that this is not just off the mark—it's off the wall. Dylan was more mysterious, private, and complex than the 1960s generation could fathom—and the humbling fact is that their greatest musical hero was not one of them.

The standard narrative of Dylan's career is that he began as a protest singer, reinvented rock by going electric at the Newport Folk Festival in the summer of 1965, became a recluse after his 1966 motorcycle accident, fiddled around with country music in the early 1970s, burnt out in some of the greatest concerts ever in the mid-1970s, slipped into Christian fundamentalism in the late 1970s, and did

STEPHEN H. WEBB is professor of religion and philosophy at Wabash College. His recent books include *American Providence* and *Taking Religion to School*.



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not recover his musical senses until his blues-inspired *Time Out of Mind*, which won three Grammy Awards in 1998. The plot of this narrative is easily recognizable as an example of the great American success story: Dylan began in innocence and glory (his protest period), had a series of falls

(first by selling out to commercialized rock, then by putting out some disappointing albums in the 1970s, and most drastically by reaching such a low point that he converted to born-again Christianity), and finally climbed back to the top by returning to his musical roots.

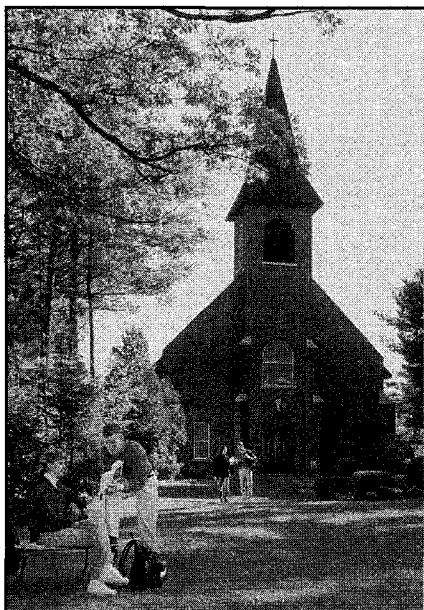
Everything about this narrative is wrong. Early in his career, Dylan was tagged with the burden of being the voice of his generation, but he was also known as a musician who fiercely guarded his creative independence. He could speak so deeply to his contemporaries because he was so out of step with them. Far from being a 1960s rebel, he rebelled against most of what that decade represented. He formed his musical ideas by listening to Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, and Johnny Cash.

He formed his political ideas before the rise of the modern conservative movement, but most of what he says in these interviews indicates conservative instincts. Of course, Dylan could be mischievously contrarian, but what stands out on these pages is the honesty and simplicity of his views.

Dylan established his reputation as a cantankerous interviewee in D.A. Pennebaker's documentary *Don't Look Back*, which took a snapshot of Dylan trying to come to terms with his growing fame during his 1965 English tour.

Watching Dylan's acerbic responses to dumb questions has all the fascination of a car wreck, but it is one thing when he jousts with journalists and quite another when he skewers an unsuspecting science student. Dylan could be cruel when he was bored or annoyed. He especially liked to play mind games with the unhip, and he resented being treated as an oracle. *Don't Look Back* is the first great rock movie, but Dylan never liked it, perhaps because it shows him abusing his fame by mistreating his fans.

The answers he gives in *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews* are surprisingly sincere, although Dylan remains a master of innuendo and a magician of misdirection. He can do a verbal dance around questions he dislikes, much as he works his voice against the expected melody line of a song. The result is that these inter-



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views tell us more about who Dylan is not than who he is, and who Dylan is not is a child of the 1960s.

In the very first interview in this collection, from 1962, Dylan was already denying that he was a folk singer. In the second interview, from 1963, he is already correcting misinterpretations of his songs. "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" is still interpreted to this day as a protest against the dangers of nuclear war.

The only thing Dylan is protesting at this point in his career is the leftist appropriation of his music: "No, no, it wasn't atomic rain. Somebody else thought that too. It's not atomic rain, it's just hard rain. It's not fallout rain, it isn't that at all. I just mean some sort of end that's just gotta happen." Dylan wrote a slew of meteorological meditations on the end of the world, beginning with "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" in 1962. Arguing that these songs are about politics is no better than claiming that they are about the weather.

Of course, most artists aim at a higher meaning than current events, but Dylan went out of his way to deny his political relevance. In a piece Nat Hentoff wrote in 1964, Dylan is caught complaining about the whole interview process. "I hate to say no, because, after all, these guys have a job to do. But it bugs me that the first question usually turns out to be, 'Are you going down South to take part in any of the civil-rights projects?'" He goes on to call the NAACP "a bunch of old guys" who were "looking to use me for something."

This comment could be dismissed as a youthful indiscretion if it were not so representative of Dylan's attitude toward the Left. Hentoff is on hand when Dylan records "I Shall Be Free No. 10," which is a humorous send-up of liberal hypocrisy: "Now I'm liberal, but to a degree / I want ev'rybody to be free / But if you think that I'll let Barry Goldwater / Move in next door and marry my daughter / You must think I'm

crazy! / I wouldn't let him do it for all the farms in Cuba."

Dylan was not interested in pointing his guitar-strumming fingers at anybody unless he could probe the delusions of utopian optimism. He tells Hentoff that "what's wrong goes much deeper than the bomb." He is interested in the verities of human nature, not the possibilities of social progress. "It's like, when somebody wants to tell me what the 'moral' thing is to do, I want them to *show* me. If they have anything to say about morals, I want to know what it is they *do*." He recounts for Hentoff the surreal story of his drunken acceptance speech for the Tom Paine Award, presented by New York's Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. The people in attendance had "been all involved with the left in the 1930s, and now they were supporting civil-rights drives. That's groovy, but they also had minks and jewels,

and it was like they were giving money out of guilt."

But hypocrisy was not their most grievous problem. These good leftists were helping blacks only because they first put blacks in a box labeled "victims." Dylan refused to see African Americans in those terms. He understood that liberalism color-codes the social grid rather than turning a blind eye to skin color altogether. "Those people that night were actually getting me to look at colored people as colored people. I tell you, I'm never going to have anything to do with any political organization again in my life." And he didn't.

From 1962 to 2004—the years covered by this selection of interviews—Dylan's weariness with the prospects for radical social change was remarkably consistent. In 1965, just as the 1960s were heating up, Dylan thought the most radical action was inaction. "I don't know



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what you do, but all I can do is cast aside all the things *not* to do." Dylan was suspicious of the utopian dreams

of the political Left long before college campuses made those dreams their reality. As he put it to Hentoff

in a 1966 *Playboy* interview, "I haven't lost any interest in protest since then. I just didn't have any interest in protest to begin with." He did not put political messages in his songs in part because, as he stated in 1966, "You've got to respect other people's right to also have a message themselves." If people wanted a message from him, he fantasized about putting thirty Western Union boys in New York's Town Hall.

One topic Dylan went out of his way to avoid discussing was the Vietnam War. In the *Playboy* interview, he came very close to dismissing the entire peace movement. "To say 'cause of peace' is just like saying 'hunk of butter.' I mean, how can you listen to anybody who wants you to believe he's dedicated to the hunk and not to the butter?" Dylan's image is peculiar but striking. In the name of peace, the anti-war movement wanted to force social change. By being organized and aggressive, they lost sight of the thing they most valued. He clearly had no sympathy for draft dodgers: "Burning draft cards isn't going to end the war. It's not even going to save any lives. If someone can feel more honest with himself by burning his draft card, then that's great; but if he's just going to feel more important because he does it, then that's a drag."

Dylan kept saying goodbye to the political Left, but they would not let him go. Perhaps there is no better evidence of the illusory nature of leftist ambitions in the 1960s than this strange insistence that Dylan was on their side. One interview stands out as a miniature masterpiece of miscommunication. In 1968 Dylan sat down with the editors of the left-wing folk magazine *Sing Out!* At one point, they proudly display their learning by telling Dylan that his songs are like Kafka's parables. "Yes," he politely responds, "but the only parables I know are the biblical parables." They are surprised. "When did you read the Bible para-

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bles?" "I have always read the Bible," answers Dylan, "though not necessarily always the parables." They joke that Dylan does not seem to be the kind of person who picks up a Gideon Bible in a hotel room. "Well," he says, wearily, "you never know." They quickly change the subject to the influence of William Blake.

It gets weirder. The editors start pushing Dylan about the Vietnam War. Shouldn't artists speak out against it? Dylan confuses them by saying, "I know some very good artists who are for the war." They do not know what to make of this, so they clarify their question. They are asking about the artists who are against the war. "That's like what I'm talking about; it's for or against the war. That really doesn't exist." Dylan mentions a painter he knows who is

for the war. They ask why he doesn't argue with him. "I can see what goes on in his paintings, and why should I?" They press him, because they just cannot fathom that Dylan does not share their political views. Dylan finally backs away by saying, "Well, there's nothing for us to talk about really." After one last effort to make Dylan fit their preconception of him, Dylan states, "People just have their own views. Anyway, how do you know I'm not, as you say, for the war?" They leave this question unanswered.

Yet they have created this idol, and they think the least he can do is fulfill their expectations. So they remind Dylan that he is known for songs like "Masters of War." In a courageous bit of self-analysis, Dylan tells them, "That was an easy thing to do. There were thousands and thousands of

people just wanting that song, so I wrote it."

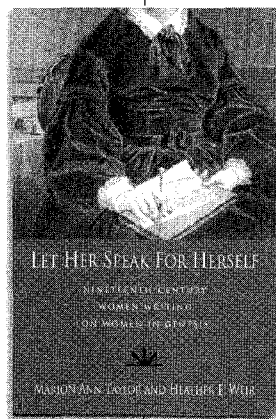
While Dylan never wavered in his disdain for political activism—in 1978 he could state that he "always considered politics just part of the illusion"—he also never backed down from expressing an interest in God, the Bible, and the supernatural. In 1965, his interviewers did not know what to make of his comment that "classical gospel could be the next trend" and that he was interested in folk music because it is "full of legend, myth, Bible, and ghosts." Knowing that he converted to Christianity at the end of 1978 makes the interview he gave earlier that year to *Playboy* especially poignant, because his confessional tone puts him on the edge of an anxious bench. When asked what he thinks people need, he brings up the idea of a spiritual crisis.

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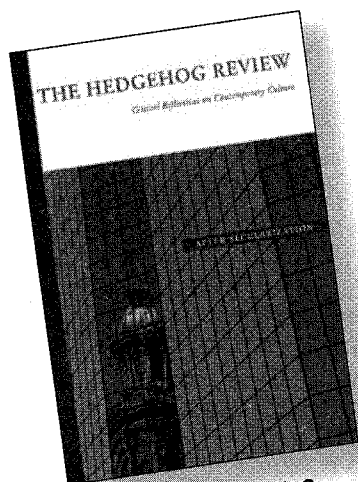
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The interviewer, sensing that he has stumbled upon something of fundamental importance to Dylan, presses a line of questions about religion. Dylan clearly has been thinking about Jesus Christ. "Who does Christ become when he lives inside a certain person?" he muses aloud. "What would Christ be in this day and age if he came back?" The interviewer, a bit startled, reminds Dylan that he grew up Jewish. "I've never felt Jewish," Dylan responds. He goes on to recall "seeing a *Time* magazine on an airplane a few years back and it had a big cover headline, 'IS GOD DEAD?' I mean, that was—would you think that was a responsible thing to do? . . . You know I think the country's gone downhill since that day." That is clearly too much for the interviewer to digest, but he keeps on this topic for a moment longer to ask about Dylan's view of the afterlife. "You mean, what do I think is in the great unknown? [Pause] Sounds, echoes of laughter."

Several of Dylan's most revealing interviews about his conversion are not included here, but those the editor did include put to rest lingering suspicions (generated by the standard narrative of his career) that his Christian phase was out of sync with the rest of his life. Dylan started off singing about the end of the world, and he ended up adopting the theological beliefs that made sense of his musical prophesying. Some Dylan observers have noted that he stopped talking publicly about his faith by the end of the 1980s, and they infer that he now has none, but what is most remarkable is that a man this private spoke as much as he did about his religious experiences. By all indications, the natural process of spiritual maturation has led him beyond the initial enthusiasm and biblical literalism of his early Christian years, though one must always keep in mind that Dylan rejects the language of progress and improvement. "I never think in terms of growth," he

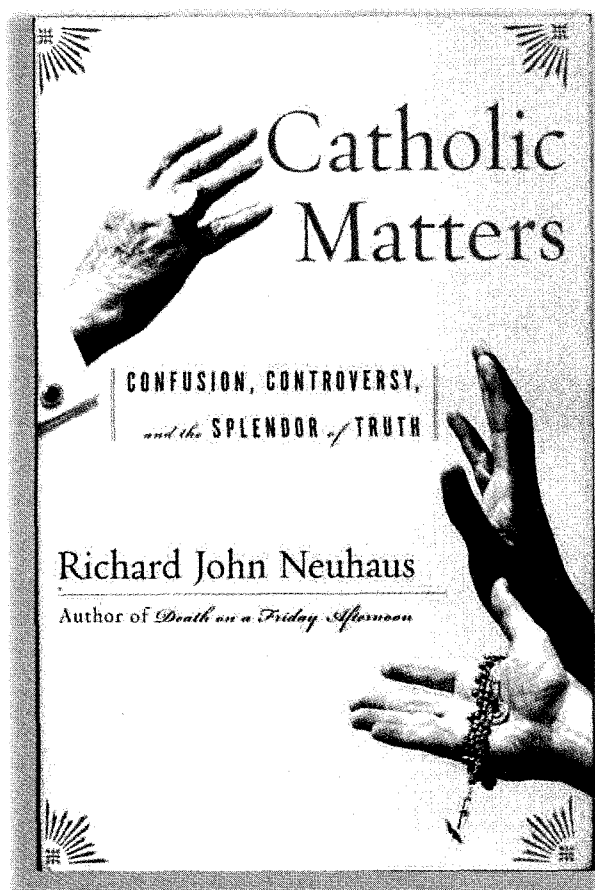
said in 1984, just as his immersion in the evangelical subculture was coming to an end.

That his faith has come close to turning into despair is the subject of *Time Out of Mine*, a dark and foreboding album that includes such lines as, "I've been walking through the middle of nowhere, trying to get to heaven before they close the door." As he explained in a 1997 interview, "I try to live within that line between despondency and hope. I'm suited to walk that line, right between the fire." He confesses to an experience onstage at a concert in Locarno, Switzerland, where he was struck by the phrase "I'm determined to stand whether God will deliver me or not." And he adds, "If we know anything about God, God is *arbitrary*. So people better be able to deal with that, too." This album was his way of dealing with the divine hiddenness that is revealed only to those who have kept watch through the dark night of the soul.

DYLAN HAS HEARD the rumors that some people think he is a conservative. When asked about this in 1986, he fell silent, mused for a moment, and then said, "Well, for me there is no Right and there is no Left. There's truth and there's untruth, y'know? There's honesty, and there's hypocrisy. Look in the Bible, you don't see nothing about Right or Left. Other people might have other ideas about things, but I don't, because I'm not that smart. I hate to keep beating people over the head with the Bible, but that's the only instrument I know, the only thing that stays true."

This is spoken like a Bible-thumper who believes that human nature never changes and that morality is a matter of personal integrity, not political revolution, and that people usually need to hear the very thing they most resist, which is to say, this is spoken like a true conservative.

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For the Secular

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SECULAR
by ROBERT A. MARKUS
University of Notre Dame Press,
99 pages, \$15

Reviewed by Thomas G. Guarino

IN HOC INTERIM SAECULO: "In this transitory world," St. Augustine says in the *City of God*, referring to the subject of his long meditation. What is the nature of this world? How are Christians to live in it? Can they share anything with those holding different beliefs?

All these questions are taken up by Robert Markus in *Christianity and the Secular*, his new monograph,

THOMAS G. GUARINO is professor of theology at Seton Hall University.

formed from the Pope John XXIII lectures delivered at Notre Dame. The word *secular* in the title is a clue to Markus' position. He conceives of it as a third realm, distinguished from both the sacred and the profane. While the sacred concerns itself with the sphere of Christian belief and the profane with those practices that Christians must repudiate, the secular belongs to a neutral dimension, referring to those elements from the surrounding culture capable of being accepted or adapted. It is the domain of what may be shared legitimately with non-Christians.

The central argument of the book, then, is that the "Christian tradition has a legitimate place for the autonomy of the secular," meaning that Christians need not subject all social, political, or cultural institutions to distinctly religious views.

Rejecting what has been called Constantinianism or, with a different connotation, *intégrisme*, Markus examines several stages of Church history. Between the apostolic age and Constantine, Christians were a palpably defined group, distinct from their society and culture, amounting to a *tertium gens* alongside Romans and Jews.

Even with this clearly demarcated boundary, the problem of distinguishing the profane from the secular existed: Should Christians bear arms? Should they enjoy pagan literature and philosophy? With the Constantinian settlement, the status of Christianity changed radically. From 313 to the 390s, Christianity went from tolerated to respectable to established. As the Church's influence in society expanded, the question of boundaries was irrepressible—

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Christianity was now tied to the empire, and Christians were increasingly assimilated into the wider culture.

For later Christian writers, such as John Howard Yoder, this period constitutes nothing less than the "Constantinian heresy," with the Church legitimating the existing sociopolitical order. But Yoder's position, Markus argues, "rules out" any possibility of a shared social or individual morality between Christians and non-Christians. It excludes, in other words, the secular realm that Markus is championing as truly Augustinian. Secular institutions, he claims (relying on Romans 13:6), are viable and provide a legitimate function, even under Christ's rule. The Church neither condemns secular forms as profane nor places them under her auspices. She recognizes them for what they are: elements belonging to an autonomous dimension.

AUGUSTINE HIMSELF, Markus maintains, resisted the growing coincidence of Church and world that had developed since the Theodosian emperors. Though briefly euphoric by the Christian triumph throughout the empire, Augustine quickly came to see that Christianity was not inextricably linked with the empire, since Rome had no privileged place in God's inscrutable providence. But if the *saeculum* is opaque as regards God's plan, Markus insists, then one may properly defend an autonomous neutral region, protecting it from a "hostile takeover" either by those wishing to incorporate it into the sacred or by those repudiating it as entirely profane.

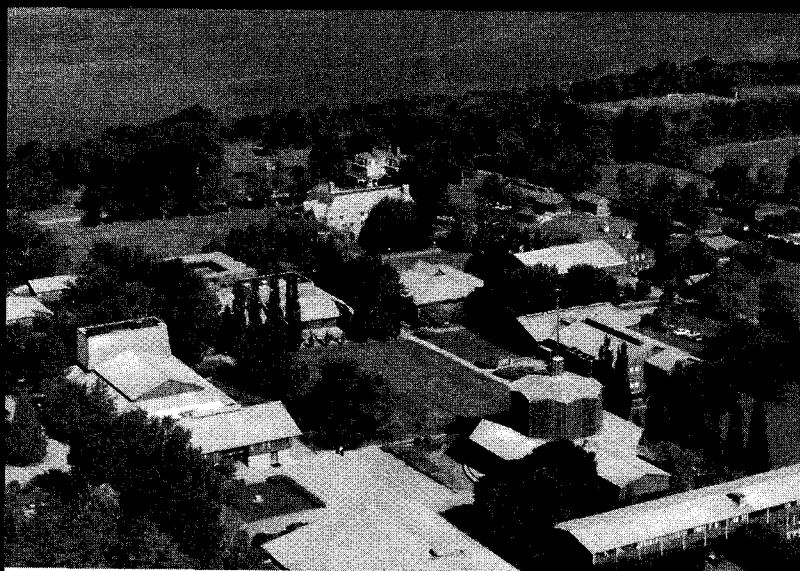
Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* serves as the major interpretative key for Markus' understanding of the secular. Observing that pagan philosophers have had insights that are true and in harmony with Christian faith, thereby breaking any innate link between philosophy and pagan

culture, Augustine makes the case for the legitimacy of secular disciplines—with the proviso that they be ultimately subordinated to Christian wisdom.

Augustine's insights in the philosophical sphere, Markus argues, parallel his thought about existing social

and political structures; both Christians and non-Christians have a similarly important stake in the *res publica*. It is true, of course, that in Book Nineteen of the *City of God* Augustine relativizes all sociopolitical institutions. Markus argues, however, that this constitutes a simultaneous

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assertion of a real autonomy of these enterprises within their restricted purview.

The insistence on an autonomous secular precinct leads Markus to examine two rivals to Augustinian political theory: those who see Augustine as tying public life inextricably to Christianity, and those who insist on severing the connection between religion and the public realm. Against the former, Markus argues that for Augustine, real if imperfect virtue may be found among denizens of the earthly city. And both Christians and non-Chris-

tians can make use of the same finite goods even if, as Augustine specifies, with a "different faith" and a "different hope." In other words, they can share existing social and political structures, just as they can share philosophy, subject always to Christian valuation. He concludes that any interpretation of Augustine that disallows a significant place for the secular dimension is unacceptable.

But Markus equally argues that it is illegitimate to adduce Augustine as a supporter of secular liberalism, regarding the *saeculum* as a sphere without moral standards, ensuring only order, security, and material needs. Augustine saw man as a social being, attached great significance to shared cultural values, and would have rejected individualism. Here one finds a tension in Augustine's thought: While it is true that he would be suspicious of the ability of political institutions to promote a moral life, nevertheless, he would not have restricted the public realm simply to material needs and basic security. Even while recognizing the gap between Church and world, Augustine would have sought "to maximize the moral and cultural consensus" of society.

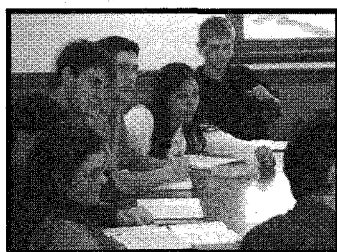
Finally, Markus observes, this autonomous secular order was eclipsed by the end of the sixth century, during the papacy of Gregory the Great. For Augustine, the ancient intellectual and cultural traditions were living realities; Christians could share in all of them (except idolatry). By the time of Gregory, however, the secular had disappeared. Society was now sacral, with the Church controlling the educational and cultural institutions as the heterogeneity of Augustine's world collapsed.

In a brief coda, Markus claims that John XXIII and Vatican II restored the autonomy of the secular, ending 1,650 years of Constantinianism, or Christendom, by opening the Church to the world in order "to learn from its ways, to engage in

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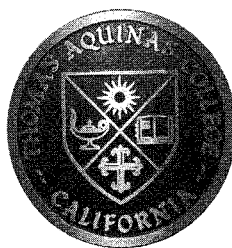
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unending dialogue, sharing all that is truly human." In fact, with Pope John and Vatican II, the Church came to embrace the secular, acknowledging its value and autonomy and even "its sacredness or holiness."

While Markus is correct that there is room for a shared "secular" dimension in Augustine's thought, calling this an "autonomous" sphere is not entirely precise. I think *le mot juste* for which Markus is searching is not pure autonomy, implying a realm separate from God, but relative autonomy, which is what Augustine champions in *On Christian Doctrine*. There is no entirely separated domain of discourse and action. There is only one supernatural order, even if, within this graced estate, there is a quarter that Christians and non-Christians may share, what might be called the province of nature. The phrase "relative autonomy" (used by Balthasar in his dialogue with Karl Barth) would exhibit this point more clearly.

ONE FINDS A distinct parallel here with John Paul II's comments in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998). The pope argues that philosophy has its own methodology, of which it is "rightly jealous," as well as a "legitimate autonomy" that cannot be compromised by theology. But the pope equally insists that one must distinguish between philosophy's autonomy and its "self-sufficiency." Philosophy can never be self-sufficient, because it can never be "absolutely independent of the contents of faith"; it ultimately requires the truth offered by revelation. The "relative autonomy" of philosophy is thereby sanctioned, while recognizing that the discipline necessarily undergoes a transformation under the light of faith.

Markus endorses this autonomous secular sphere as a contemporary model, and he offers Augustine's attitude toward classical

learning and the political order as prototypes for our own times. But one must distinguish between the classical culture that predated Christianity and the contemporary culture that has often been formed in reaction *against* Christian beliefs and norms. This does not mean there

cannot be a relatively autonomous shared space, but it does mean there is not quite the same neutrality of culture today that may have existed in the ancient world. One can say, for example, as Markus does, that from Pius IX to Pius XII the Church turned its back on culture. But one

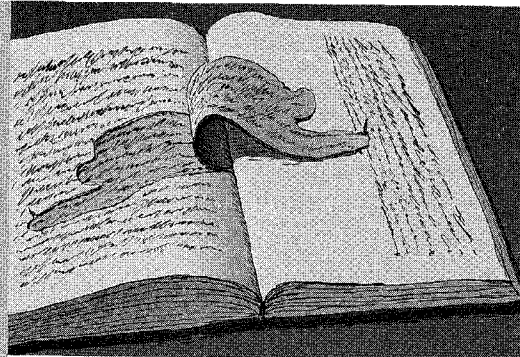
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must also take account of the fact that the secular culture of the Pisan era differed from culture at the time of Augustine. This is why the compelling question today is so pointed: How does one participate in contemporary political and social institutions while avoiding sectarianism yet maintaining Christian orthodoxy?

Vatican II, however, did open the Church to dialogue with the world, thereby recovering the Spoils-from-Egypt tradition that began with Origen, Basil, and Augustine. John Henry Newman said that the Church absorbs ideas from many sources but purifies them in the refiner's fire and stamps them with the image of the Master. The historian Henri de Lubac, in his 1938 work *Catholicism*, similarly stated that "nothing authentically human, whatever its origin, can be alien to the Church." Just as Cyril used Plato, so Ambrose used Seneca, and Aquinas used Aristotle, and Matteo Ricci used Confucius.

The council adopted the insights of Newman and de Lubac when it declared that the Church looks with great respect on all that is true, good, and just in the institutions that the human race has established (*Gaudium et Spes* 42); that whatever good is found in the various practices and cultures of diverse peoples is healed and perfected in Christ (*Lumen Gentium* 17); and that while a bountiful God has distributed treasures among all nations, these riches must be illumined by the light of the gospel "to set them free and to bring them under the dominion of God their Savior" (*Ad Gentes* 11).

There is, in other words, a relative autonomy of the secular, always needing further purification in Christ, precisely as Augustine had argued. This last point, the healing and ennobling of the secular order, while certainly alluded to by Markus, needs to be more forcefully pressed: Scriptural revelation is the ultimate norm of truth.

Life Unworthy of Life

A CONCISE HISTORY OF
EUTHANASIA

by IAN DOWBIGGIN
*Rowman and Littlefield, 176 pages,
\$22.95*

Reviewed by Wesley J. Smith

TO READ IAN DOWBIGGIN'S *A Concise History of Euthanasia* is to learn that in more than a century of advocacy for euthanasia, the arguments have barely changed at all.

The drive to legalize killing as an acceptable answer to the problems associated with human suffering is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. True, as Dowbiggin reports, assisted suicide and what we now call euthanasia were unremarkable in antiquity: Roman doctors were allowed to kill their patrons if requested, for example. Indeed, Dowbiggin writes, the Hippocratic Oath's ancient requirement that doctors forbear assisting the suicides of patients may have been a "kind of protest against the frequency with which euthanasia was practiced."

But once Christianity became dominant in Europe, the doctor's role changed dramatically. Deeply influenced by the Judaism that viewed suicide as "an affront to God that demonstrated contempt for the gift of life," Christianized Europe forbade the practice of exposing disabled infants, and doctors (such as they were) ceased participating in the intentional ending of their patients' lives.

During the next 1,500 years, suicide was universally deemed in the West to be a reprehensible act against

God and community. Death-bed suffering was to be accepted stoically, and the role of doctors was merely to be present and caring for patient and family throughout the ordeal. Those who short-circuited these travails with suicide were unmercifully condemned. Indeed, medieval society's response to the tragedy of suicide was not in the least what we today would consider Christian. "Self murder," as it was then known (the word *suicide* wasn't coined until 1642), was deemed so heinous that the body of a suicide victim would be dragged through the streets and his property confiscated to impoverish his heirs.

Attitudes toward suicide and the duty of doctors to alleviate suffering rather than merely bear witness to it began to shift in the eighteenth century, Dowbiggin reports. With the coming of the Enlightenment, some philosophers and public intellectuals saw suicide "as a rationalist protest against conventional morality." Thus Voltaire and, especially, David Hume argued that people should be free to commit suicide if they perceived their lives to be too burdensome. But even then, Dowbiggin notes, "the bound-

aries between a right to suicide and a social duty to kill oneself were never terribly clear."

Yet it wasn't the emerging rationalism of the Enlightenment that launched the international euthanasia movement we see in our time: For every Hume and Voltaire, there was a Kant and Wesley arguing powerfully against what today is called the "right to die." Rather, it was the explosion of nineteenth-century materialist thinking that finally shattered society's religion-based moral and ethical consensus against suicide and mercy killing.

In other words, this change in attitudes toward mercy killing was a symptom, not a cause. What was really going on, the author asserts rightly, was an epochal shift away from the belief that human life has intrinsic value simply because it is human. Thus it is hardly surprising that euthanasia advocacy emerged concurrently with the rise of even more pernicious and destructive movements such as eugenics and social Darwinism.

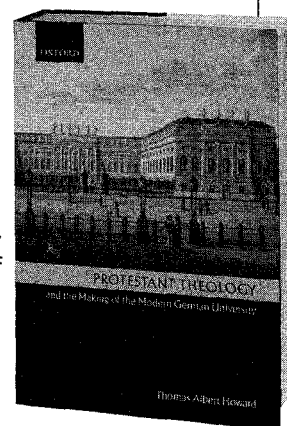
Dowbiggin traces modern euthanasia advocacy back to 1870 and an essay by a schoolteacher named

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Samuel D. Williams. Williams was the first to redefine the word *euthanasia* away from meaning a peaceful natural death experienced amid the love of family while in a state of grace, to the act of mercy killing—a definition that has stuck to this day.

It is fascinating how this first essay contained many of the same arguments that are voiced by contemporary proponents of assisted suicide. (Dowbiggin should have reproduced it in an appendix.) For example, Williams argued that the merciful medical practice of using strong drugs to control pain, which by his time had become a standard medical practice, was no different from mercy killing, because some patients died from palliative treatment—still a central argument of the euthanasia advocates.

Williams also promoted a strong social Darwinist mindset that became prominent among many elites of the time, which saw the killing of dying, elderly, and seriously impaired individuals as simply a merciful means of carrying out nature's "mortal struggle." This, too, remains a prominent strain in current euthanasia advoca-

cy—although the more politically savvy contemporary assisted suicide activists generally focus on feel-good assertions of "compassion" and "choice." Still, the so-called duty to die and the idea of euthanizing infants who are born disabled or dying—a practice Dowbiggin duly notes led to mass murder in Germany—continues to be heard. The promotion by Princeton's notorious Peter Singer of infanticide is the most obvious example, an act soon to be legalized formally in The Netherlands. One of Britain's most prominent public intellectuals, Baroness Mary Warnock, whom the London *Times* has called Britain's "philosopher queen," was recently quoted as promoting a duty to die among the elderly as a remedy to their being "a nuisance" and a financial drain on family and society.

As Dowbiggin traces the waxing and waning tides of euthanasia advocacy since 1870, several distinct and constant themes stand out. First, many (though certainly not all) euthanasia advocates—Peter Singer, Jack Kevorkian, Hemlock Society founder Derek Humphry, Australia's "Dr. Death" Philip Nitschke,



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Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong, among many others—argue from distinctly anti-traditional, un-Judeo-Christian starting points. Second, many euthanasia advocates reject belief in the intrinsic value of human life as irrational and anti-scientific. Third, there is seen among most advocates a fixation on personal autonomy. Fourth, euthanasia supporters tend to exhibit a visceral revulsion to suffering and see death as an appropriate method of controlling it. Fifth, euthanasia is generally viewed as merely one important element in a longer laundry list of progressive political goals (and thus, Dowbiggen notes, euthanasia has long been considered a feminist cause because of the worry that the “burden” of caring for the very sick and elderly falls most heavily on women).

The tactics of euthanasia activists have also remained generally constant for the last one hundred years: constant recourse to euphemisms to describe killing, scaremongering about the likelihood of unrelievable suffering, and attacks against political opponents as theocrats attempting to impose superstition on society.

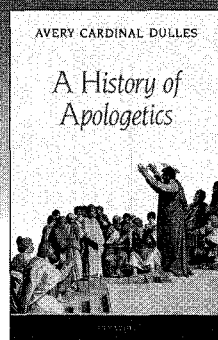
Then there are the sporadic appearances of renegades who decide to spur euthanasia into wider public acceptance through what anarchists called the “propaganda of the deed,” either by publicly announcing their intent to commit suicide as a way of breaking society’s resistance to mercy killing or breaking the laws against assisted suicide and daring society to stop them.

Jack Kevorkian is the best known of these today, but he was not the first. In 1915 the “Black Stork,” a physician named Harry Haiselden, refused to perform surgery to save the life of a disabled infant named Alan Bollinger. When prosecutors failed to bring a case against him, he used his notoriety to mount a public campaign to legalize euthanasia for disabled persons—including writing a

movie script about the Bollinger case. Another example was the 1935 suicide of noted feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who publicized her plans beforehand, stating that she preferred “chloroform to cancer.” Gilman’s suicide was similar to recent cases of pre-publicized assisted sui-

cides such as those of Canadian Sue Rodriguez in 1994 and Australian Nancy Crick, who committed suicide in 2002 in the presence of euthanasia advocates who applauded while she took her overdose. (Crick had cancer but her autopsy showed she was not terminally ill.)

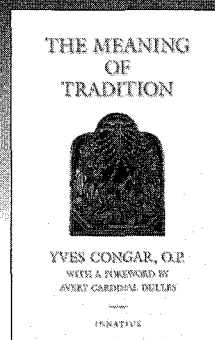
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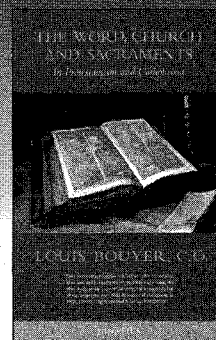
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Dowbiggin's time-line narrative includes it all: German intellectual advocacy of the concept of "life unworthy of life" beginning in 1920; the popularity of euthanasia in America during the 1930s; the public revulsion against the death agenda in the wake of the Holocaust; the Dutch experience; and the sudden turnaround in the movement's political fortunes in the United States, which culminated in Oregon's legalization of assisted suicide in 1994.

Unlike some historians who write about radical social movements, Dowbiggin does not ignore those who have worked vigorously against the euthanasia movement. Most gratifyingly, he gives due credit to Cecily Saunders—one of the twentieth century's great medical humanitarians—for her almost single-handed creation of the modern hospice movement. And he highlights the important contribution of University of Minnesota law professor Yale Kamisar, who warned as far back as the 1950s that "the legal machinery initially designed to kill those who are a nuisance to themselves may someday engulf those who are a nuisance to others."

Recent cases such as the 1993 murder in Canada of twelve-year-old Tracy Latimer by her father, Robert, because she had cerebral palsy, as well as the pressure New York editor George DeLury admitted placing on his wife Myrna Lebov to commit suicide in 1995 because she had multiple sclerosis, illustrate Kamisar's prescience. (DeLury initially depicted his participation in Lebov's suicide as altruistic. But this defense shattered when it was revealed that he had pressured her to kill herself, writing in his diary, "I have work to do, people to see, places to travel. But no one asks about my needs. I have fallen prey to the tyranny of a victim.")

A Concise History is occasionally too concise. The issues of suicide and mercy killing in China, Japan, and the East are treated too swiftly. Only one

paragraph is devoted to the influential thinking of Kant. And I was worried up to the end of the book that the author would ignore the many contributions of the modern disability-rights movement to thwarting the ambitions of euthanasia activists. At the book's close, Dowbiggin nods briefly in their direction—too little credit for a group crucial since 1996 in preventing assisted suicide from being legalized in the United States beyond the borders of Oregon.

But overall, Dowbiggin has produced a well-written text of considerable breadth given its self-imposed limits. Those generally interested in the topic will find all they need to know about the whys and hows of euthanasia belief and advocacy in this short and easy-to-digest book. For students and scholars, Dowbiggin has fulfilled the promise of his title and produced the best available concise history of euthanasia. That the subject could sustain a longer treatment in the future should still trouble us all.

BRIEFLY NOTED

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

by E.H. GOMBRICH

Yale Univ. Press, 284 pages, \$25

In 1935, a young German with a newly minted doctorate in art history was challenged to write a history of the world for children, and was given six weeks to do so. It has sold in the millions and been translated into dozens of languages but, until now, not into English. Gombrich, who is best known for *The Story of Art*, lived to be a very old man and updated the "little history" to cover the last sixty years. The result is a charming read that extends from prehistory to nuclear warfare and can be enjoyed also by adults in search of an instructive overview of the human drama. Of course, it is not, and does not pre-

tend to be, an authoritative account. American history makes a late and rather brief appearance. Most strikingly, the cheerful account of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment—"A Truly New Age"—is sadly contradicted by so much that was to follow. The book ends on the note that "we still have the right to go on hoping for a better future." The right, perhaps, but on the author's telling of the story, it is not evident we have the reason.

DECADE OF NIGHTMARES

by PHILIP JENKINS

Oxford Univ. Press, 344 pages, \$28

Although he employs it, Jenkins is rightly skeptical of the device of labeling history by decades. His subtitle is "the end of the sixties and the making of eighties America." Endless books

have been written about "the sixties." Then there are those who say the sixties were really the flowering (or the rotting) of the fifties, while others contend that what we associate with the sixties mainly happened in the seventies. Jenkins is inclined to the view that the mid-seventies saw the apex of radicalisms to which the country has been reacting ever since. His account is nothing if not detailed, recalling the specifics of stories behind headlines even those who were there at the time may have long forgotten. *Decade of Nightmares* provides a wild and informative ride.

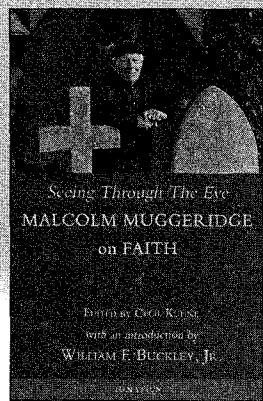
JUNE 1941: HITLER AND STALIN

by JOHN LUKACS

Yale Univ. Press, 164 pages, \$25

Following up on his other celebrated books on World War II, historian

Lukacs once again makes the case that history is made more by persons than by anonymous forces. The progress and outcome of World War II turned on the persons and personalities of Hitler and Stalin, and how each understood, and critically misunderstood, the intentions of the other. Up until the very last moment, and beyond, Stalin convinced himself that Hitler would not attack Russia. He did not welcome the prospect of becoming the indispensable ally of the capitalist British and Americans in defeating Hitler. Hitler, on the other hand, thought his quick defeat of Russia would convince Britain that it was futile to hold out against a Europe, West and East, entirely dominated by Germany. As with Lukacs' other books on this great conflict, *June 1941* is an engrossing and instructive read.



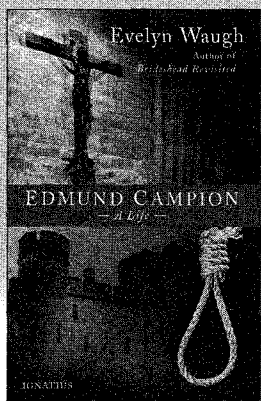
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Edited by Cecil Kuhne

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

CHECKS, BALANCES, AND BISHOPS

Talk about revolutions and semi-revolutionary changes in the Catholic Church has been a commonplace since the Second Vatican Council. Such agitations have, not to put too fine a point on it, become something of a bore.

There is another movement afoot, however, that could portend a very big change. Whether that prospect is hopeful or ominous, you will have to decide. The initiative is called the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, and the moving spirit here is Geoffrey Boisi, a major player in New York financial circles and former chairman of the board of Boston College. Also at the center of these fascinating developments is Francis J. Butler, the highly respected president of an organization straightforwardly named Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc. (FADICA).

The Roundtable project got its start with a meeting at Yale in March 2003 and a follow-up meeting the next July, to which Geoffrey Boisi invited a group of mainly liberal usual suspects to think and plan about the future of the Church in America. He described the group as "our friends from FADICA, *America, Commonweal*, the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College, Zogby International, and leaders from various [mainly Jesuit] Catholic universities." The July meeting was held at the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, with Theodore Cardinal McCarrick in attendance. When word of the meeting got out, there was a protest that no conservatives had been invited. In response, there was a later

meeting with conservatives to hear, so to speak, the other side. That meeting did not go well.

Attentive to the possibility of the project being viewed as a liberal conspiracy, Mr. Boisi has since reached out to noted conservatives, as well as others who at least are not notably liberal, to include them in the program of the Roundtable. I was invited but declined for reasons that will become evident. Other conservatives and moderates—please forgive the use of the almost unavoidable labels—also declined. As it stands, the Roundtable is a collaborative effort of wealthy East Coast Catholics, academics, editors, and Church activists who are determined to devise a strategy for establishing a major role for the laity in the governance of the Catholic Church in this country.

The initiative has produced a book, *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*, and a report, "The Church in America: The Way Forward in the 21st Century." (Information is available on the website of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Life, which is directed by Alan Wolfe.) In its initial and subsequent meetings, the Roundtable has continued to advance its goal, which, according to Mr. Boisi, is to provide a "check and balance" on the role of the bishops and, according to Mr. Butler of Foundations and Donors, to "allow lay people to speak in the name of the Church."

Undoubtedly, some who have been recruited by the Roundtable only want to assist the bishops in their leadership of the Church. And nobody would dispute that the bishops need all the help they can get in improving management and financial practices, and, to that end, should draw more fully on the talents of lay people. Yet it seems evident that the Roundtable has much bigger things in mind. The apparent goal is to create an institutional structure that will propose itself

as representing the lay people in speaking for the Catholic Church, whether in tandem with or as an alternative to the voice of the bishops. The further apparent goal is to gain control of—or at least to exercise major influence in—a large measure of Church governance, employing the immense wealth to which the Roundtable has access.

Moderate Tonalities

These are goals long espoused by the academics, editors, and Church activists associated with this project. In its more modest statement of purpose, the project is to be a “clearinghouse” for the bishops, providing them with “best practices” in business management. But there is also the plan to establish a permanent national “Leadership Roundtable” of up to 225 members. Such an institution seems disproportionate to the task of giving the bishops business advice. Not surprisingly, some think they detect an effort to “democratize” the Church by establishing—somewhat along the lines of the Episcopal Church—a “house of delegates” composed of laity to balance the “house of bishops.” If that is the long-term goal, it would indeed be a radical change in the way the Catholic Church understands her constitution.

The tone adopted by those leading the Roundtable initiative is generally moderate. They say they do not intend to intervene in doctrinal matters; they are not, for instance, urging the ordination of women or the popular election of bishops. On the other hand, the leaders of this initiative are thinking long term, believing that they have time and resources on their side. In *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*, Francis Butler writes that the initiative will “marshal the talent, education, and experience of the best lay Catholic leaders in government, business, charitable, and other sectors to help chart a course of reconstruction in the church’s administrative life.” He proposes that this “could begin as an independent initiative of the laity, akin to a blue-ribbon panel, with the informal encouragement and participation of leading members of the American hierarchy to give it standing and yet the freedom to speak with independence.”

The project is developing into something more like a permanent assembly than a blue-ribbon panel, and it is reported that such an assembly will meet regularly, much as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops does, and have its own staff and programs to speak in the name of the laity. Once the Roundtable is perceived as a legitimate part of the structure of Catholicism in America, it would be in a position to raise funds in the name of the Church. That is a task for

which its business and financial leaders are well suited. Presumably, bishops would be invited to submit applications for funding for their various institutions and programs.

If the 225 members of the Roundtable were subject to term limits, this would create an ever-expanding membership and perhaps lead to the establishment of “Leadership Roundtables” at the diocesan level. Such a “lay management ecclesiology” might be envisioned along the lines of the way that Jesuit and other universities have developed lay control in recent decades. The bishop would keep his teaching and sacramental roles intact but would share governance with those who define “best practices” and are in a position to give or withhold funding for preferred practices. Of course, it is not inconceivable that the definition of best practices could impinge also on what, from a business and marketing perspective, is deemed prudent in many other areas of the Church’s life and mission.

A commentary in the *Los Angeles Lay Catholic Mission* is sharply critical of the Roundtable. There it is said that “the collaboration models that the recommendations suggest smell more of a board of company stockholders than a plebiscite. We have here nothing so hopeful as a peasants’ revolt but something more tedious—a corporate takeover, for instance, or a parliamentary power play.” That may be overheated, but it is not without support in some of the documents and statements surrounding the Roundtable initiative.

The people associated with the Roundtable project are experienced, resourceful, and possessed of expertise in long-term planning and institutional management. Bishops who might welcome the help offered by the Roundtable project in its early phases may later find that those who only wanted to be of assistance have effectively taken over a large part of the decision-making authority traditionally belonging to the episcopal office. He who pays the piper, and all that.

An additional concern expressed by lay critics of the Roundtable project is that it would create a small elite of wealthy lay people and progressive activists falsely claiming to represent the millions of lay faithful. In response to this concern, it is said that the Boisi group is only taking the initiative in a restructuring of the governance of the Catholic Church that will, in its successive phases, expand to include democratically elected representation at every level of the Church’s life.

Catholics who have for so long been agitating for the revolution that they believe was mandated by the Second Vatican Council may be somewhat disconcerted to discover that their cause has been hijacked (as they might well see it) by the leaders of business and finance. But, as one has numerous occasions to observe, history has many ironies in the fire. And, of course, it is possi-

ble that Geoffrey Boisi and others connected with the Roundtable project really do have nothing more in mind than providing business advice to the bishops. Admittedly, the history of the project to date does not support such a modest reading of its leaders' intentions.

The introduction to *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church* notes that the book's essays "focus on the urgent and far-reaching changes in ecclesial governance, administrative style, and financial accountability called for if the congregation of the faithful in the future is to fulfill its hallowed aspiration to be the salt of the earth and the light of the nations." In his own essay, Francis Butler writes, "Many, if not most, bishops have proven themselves unable to measure up to the demands of running the multimillion-dollar organizations which U.S. dioceses have become."

Again, nobody should deny that the bishops need all the help they can get. But talk about "far-reaching changes in ecclesial governance" would be less problematic were it more obvious that those pressing for such changes have a firm understanding of and commitment to the ecclesiology by which the Catholic Church is constituted.

FT

AND YOU WERE (ARE) THERE

To have lived in the Athens of Socrates, the Rome of Augustus, the Christendom of Charlemagne, or the Philadelphia of the Constitutional Convention—ah, what stories we would have to tell. Yet all of us, even most young people among us, have lived in a period of the highest historical drama. To mention it now, however, is so, well, so yesterday. The drama was the Cold War, and it will likely be a long time before the story is so well told as it is told by John Lewis Gaddis, the distinguished professor of history at Yale University, in *The Cold War: A New History*.

"For all its dangers, atrocities, costs, distractions, and moral compromises, the Cold War—like the American Civil War—was a necessary contest that settled fundamental issues once and for all. We have no reason to miss it. But, given the alternatives, we have little reason to regret its having occurred." That's a big judgment, and maybe Gaddis is right. One can imagine other ways in which the question of slavery in America might have been settled once and for all. And, by his own telling, Gaddis knows that there were contingencies and personalities that might have made the Cold

War something very different from what it was. Further, I'm not at all sure about that "once and for all." I suppose it depends on what "fundamental issues" one has in mind. The conflict between truth and freedom, on the one hand, and oppression in the service of a beguiling delusion, on the other, is never definitively settled. At least not before Our Lord's return in glory.

At its beginning, the outcome of the Cold War was by no means self-evident, given the "correlation of forces," as Marxists used to say. "It was at least as easy to believe in 1945," writes Gaddis, "that authoritarian communism was the wave of the future as that democratic capitalism was." In resisting Communist advances in Greece and Turkey, a much-scorned and widely underestimated American president announced in 1947 that it now "must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures. . . . We must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way." That was the Truman Doctrine that gave formal shape to a war that lasted more than forty years.

From the beginning through to the end, the conflict was shadowed by the threat of atomic and hydrogen weaponry. Millions of Americans alive today remember crouching under school desks in practice alerts. In the early 1950s, George Kennan, father of the doctrine of the "containment" of communism, noted that the use of force had historically been "a means to an end other than warfare, . . . an end which at least did not negate the principle of life itself." All that changed with the possession of atomic and hydrogen bombs. Kennan wrote: "[These weapons] reach backward beyond the frontiers of western civilization to the concepts of warfare that were once familiar to the Asiatic hordes. They cannot really be reconciled with a political purpose directed to shaping, rather than destroying, the lives of the adversary. They fail to take into account the ultimate responsibility of men for one another, and even for each other's errors and mistakes. They imply the admission that man not only can be but is his own worst and most terrible enemy."

The lesson he drew was from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*:

*Power into will, will into appetite
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce a universal prey
And last eat himself up.*

Throughout his life, Harry Truman claimed in public that he had not lost a moment's sleep over his decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. His actions

and his private reflections suggest otherwise. On the day the bomb was first tested in the New Mexico desert, he wrote in his journal that "machines are ahead of morals by some centuries, and when morals catch up perhaps there will be no reason for any of it." A year later, he wrote, "The human animal and his emotions change not much from age to age. He must change now or he faces absolute and complete destruction, and maybe the insect age or an atmosphereless planet will succeed him." We owe it to Truman, writes Gaddis, that he removed decision-making control over atomic weapons from the military. "He reversed a pattern in human behavior so ancient that its origins lay shrouded in the mists of time: that when weapons are developed, they will be used."

Throughout the Cold War, there were anti-anti-Communist liberals who belittled the reality of Soviet espionage. Worry about Communist spies and sympathizers was dismissed as "McCarthyism," referring to Senator Joseph McCarthy who did so much to discredit the cause that he claimed to serve. But the espionage was real. Gaddis writes, "It is likely, indeed, that during the first years of the postwar era, Soviet intelligence knew more about American atomic bombs than the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff did. Moscow's spies—having penetrated the top levels of the British intelligence establishment—were that good, while Truman's determination to maintain civilian supremacy over his own military establishment was that strong."

Eisenhower, says Gaddis, was "at once the most subtle and brutal strategist of the nuclear age." War means a contest, he told a friend, but what kind of contest is it when "the outlook comes close to destruction of the enemy and suicide for ourselves?" In 1959 he declared that, if war came, "you might as well go out and shoot everyone you see and then shoot yourself." Yet Eisenhower insisted that if the Soviets launched an atomic attack, the United States would respond in kind. "It was," writes Gaddis, "as if Eisenhower was in denial: that a kind of nuclear autism had set in, in which he refused to listen to the advice he got from the best minds available." Then Gaddis adds, "In retrospect, though, it appears that Eisenhower's may have been the best mind available, for he understood better than his advisers what war is really like."

Enter M.A.D.—"Mutual Assured Destruction"—under John F. Kennedy and Robert McNamara. After the Cuban missile crisis, the point at which the world came close to a nuclear exchange, the doctrine was that the horror of nuclear war was the best guarantee that there would be no nuclear war. Gaddis observes: "That, however, was simply a restatement of what Eisenhower had long since concluded: that the advent of thermonuclear weapons meant that war could no longer be an

instrument of statecraft—rather the survival of states required that there be no war at all." It should be noted, however, that war continued, and continues, to be an instrument of statecraft—so long as it does not involve the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons.

A War of Ideas

The Cold War was, at bottom, a war of ideas. It began long before what we call the Cold War with Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918, which Gaddis calls "the single most influential statement of an *American* ideology in the twentieth century." It was a direct response to the ideological challenge posed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and "there began at this point a war of ideas—a contest between visions—that would extend through the rest of World War I, the interwar years, World War II, and most of the Cold War."

Many American thinkers were made uneasy by Wilson's "absolutism." Many openly sympathized with the Soviet Union, seeing it as "the future that works." Others were deeply ambivalent. In 1943, a noted theologian wrote, "Russia has less liberty and more equality. Whether democracy should be defined primarily in terms of liberty or of equality is a source of unending debate." That was, in 1943, the tough-minded Reinhold Niebuhr, who later would become among the staunchest of anti-Communist liberals.

Here is how Gaddis describes the conflict of visions that defined the Cold War: "Both of the ideologies that defined those worlds were meant to offer hope: that is why one has an ideology in the first place. One of them, however, had come to depend for its functioning on the creation of fear. The other had no need to do so. Therein lay the basic ideological asymmetry of the Cold War." It needs to be added that the cultivation of a well-founded fear that the other side might prevail was essential to maintaining popular resolve in the defense of freedom. Then, as today, those who deny that there is a real and threatening enemy accuse the defenders of fearmongering. The question is whether, in fact, there is an enemy to be feared.

The beginning of the end of the Cold War—although the end was long delayed—began, says Gaddis, with Khrushchev's address to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party in 1956. There he denounced the cult of personality and the monstrosities perpetrated by Stalin. "I was obliged to tell the truth about the past," he later recalled, "whatever the risks to me." But the risks were not just to Khrushchev but also to the entire Soviet system. Gaddis writes: "The system he was trying to preserve had itself been based, since the time of Marx and Engels, on the claim

to be error-free. That was what it meant to have discovered the engine that drives history forward. A movement based on science had little place for confession, contrition, and the possibility of redemption. The problem Khrushchev created for himself and for the international Communist movement, therefore, began almost from the moment he finished speaking."

The Marxist ideology provided a rationale for the killing of at least a hundred million people, some say many more than that. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, a sign went up on an East German factory: "To the workers of the world: I am sorry." As Gaddis wryly notes, "There hardly needed to be a signature."

June 2, 1979

Gaddis gives all the major players—such as Thatcher, Gorbachev, Havel, Reagan, John Paul II, Nixon, Kissinger—a fair and dispassionate assessment in their part in ending the Cold War. (Kissinger does not come off well.) As he was preparing to run for president, Ronald Reagan offered his view of the much-vaunted policy of détente: "Isn't that what a farmer has with his turkey—until Thanksgiving Day?" His background in the movies led many people to underestimate Reagan, says Gaddis, "for Reagan was as skillful a politician as the nation had seen for many years, and one of its sharpest grand strategists ever. His strength lay in his ability to see beyond complexity to simplicity. And what he saw was simply this: that because détente perpetuated—and had been meant to perpetuate—the Cold War, only killing détente could end the Cold War." Although it was then condemned as recklessly simplistic, few today would dissent from Reagan's description of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."

Gaddis gives a starring role, if not the starring role, in the ending of the Cold War to John Paul II, although his account might have benefited by drawing on George Weigel's *The Final Revolution and Witness to Hope*. Gaddis writes, "When John Paul II kissed the ground at the Warsaw airport on June 2, 1979, he began the process by which communism in Poland—and ultimately everywhere else in Europe—would come to an end." Stalin's jibe about the pope having no divisions was soon to receive its definitive answer. As the Cold War was rooted in a conflict of ideologies and visions, so it was a drama unfolding in narrative form, and nobody could equal John Paul as a master of the dramatic arts.

In a chapter focusing on the chief actors in the end of communism, Gaddis employs three crucial epigraphs: John Paul's "Be not afraid," China's Deng Xiaoping's "Seek truth from facts," and Mikhail Gorbachev's "We can't go on living like this." A great deal

was risked in the Cold War, and dangerously wrong judgments were made on all sides. But most readers will agree with the author's judicious conclusion:

Still, for all of this and a great deal more, the Cold War could have been worse—much worse. It began with a return of fear and ended in a triumph of hope, an unusual trajectory for great historical upheavals. It could easily have been otherwise: the world spent the last half of the 20th century having its deepest anxieties not confirmed. The binoculars of a distant future will confirm this, for had the Cold War taken a different course there might have been no one left to look back through them. That is something. To echo the Abbé Sieyès when asked what he did during the French Revolution, most of us survived.

As I say, it will likely be a long time before we have another historical account of this drama as well-informed, judicious, and readable as John Lewis Gaddis' *The Cold War*. The success of U.S. policy, supported by our allies, was in largest part the work of those whom Secretary of State Dean Acheson described as being "present at the creation." Especially in the immediate postwar years, they were the representatives of a clear-thinking, tough-minded liberalism that Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once called, a long time ago, "the vital center."

Today we are confronted by a different ideologically driven enemy. Islamist jihadism is different also, in that, unlike Marxism, its cause is not susceptible to historical falsification. As Gaddis notes, Marxism was a quasi-religious faith in a "scientific" explanation of history. Beginning with Khrushchev's 1956 speech, it suffered blow after blow, and the presumably infallible explanation was finally shattered by the history it claimed to explain. The jihadists, instead, are sustained by faith in the will of God by which their victory may be long delayed—they speak of a war of two hundred years—but is absolutely certain. In resisting them, geopolitical "containment" along the lines of George Kennan's answer to communism will not work because they are not limited by geography or nation states. Religious-ideological conversion seems improbable.

Of course, American leaders, too, invoke the will of God and declare their faith in the ultimate triumph of freedom. There is no moral symmetry here, however. The cause of freedom, democracy, peace, and development is posited against a brutally aggressive war declared by the jihadists. Whether or not he invokes God explicitly, in opposing that aggression, no morally sane person engages in a conflict without believing, or

at least hoping, that he is on the side of a transcendent justice. After all the nuances and complexities are given their due, it really does come down to choosing sides.

In the situation after the attacks of September 11, 2001, some say we are engaged in World War IV, referring to the Cold War as World War III. Many Americans seem to be uncertain about whether we are at war at all. They will be momentarily awakened by the next attack, and may be wide awake if they are not among the victims of a nuclear or biochemical attack in a major metropolitan area. Meanwhile, however, they are vaguely aware of a threatening presence—both external and internal—that they would much prefer to be handled by diplomacy and police action. Talk about war strikes them as disquietingly overheated.

And if it really is war, they would much prefer that it be led by almost anybody other than the current administration. This is the theme developed in Peter Beinart's recent book, *The Good Fight: Why Liberals—and Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again*. Beinart is the former editor of the *New Republic* and he deplores what has happened to liberalism at the hands of the Democratic party. The McGovern revolution of 1972 continues today, he believes, in holding liberalism hostage to the leftist escapism of Michael Moore, Howard Dean, and John Kerry, for example.

The philosophical hero of *The Good Fight* is the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who in the aftermath of World War II rallied liberals to a “moral realism” in defending the free world (without sneer quotes) against communism. The problem is that there are today few liberals of that type to rally. And even fewer with any influence in the Democratic party. Witness the isolation of Senator Joseph Lieberman for his support of the war on terror. Niebuhrian liberals are today the former Democrats or nominal Democrats who are commonly called neoconservatives.

In his animus against President Bush and his administration, Beinart neglects an elementary truth that Niebuhr well understood: In the real world of conflicting powers and ambitions, we do not often, or even usually, get to select our enemies and allies. As an enemy, terrorism is more amorphous than were the Soviet Union and Mao's China during the Cold War, but the enemy is no less real. One may wish Beinart well in his effort to recall liberalism to a Niebuhrian appreciation of the present danger. It does not seem natural that one party should have a near-monopoly on the allegiance of the grown-ups.

The McGovern revolution, however, has not yet run its course. If anything, the intensity of partisan anger against the person and policies of the president seems to grow and grow. To speak of “our president”

or of “our foreign policy” or even of “our troops” is to invite outraged reaction. What Peter Beinart knows and yet, perhaps admirably, refuses to accept is that many of those whom he is trying to persuade have somewhere along the way decided that this is not their country. Which is not to say that they are not patriotic, but they are patriots of another America—an America of their preference, an America at peace, an America without enemies.

John Lewis Gaddis tells the story of blindness, delusions, and blunders. But, in the main, it is the story of grown-ups who saw their duty and did it, and by the grace of God, they prevailed. Now we are engaged in another “long twilight struggle,” as John F. Kennedy called the Cold War. There have been and will be blindnesses, delusions, and blunders aplenty. Whether there will be another generation prepared to see its duty and do it is at this point an open question.

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PERSON, CHARISM, AND THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

This past May, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), with the approval of the Holy Father, issued a communiqué indicating that the decision had been made “to invite” Father Marcial Maciel “to a reserved life of penitence and prayer, relinquishing any form of public ministry.”

Fr. Maciel is the founder of the Legionaries of Christ and its lay association, Regnum Christi. The Legion has more than 600 priests and 2,500 seminarians in some twenty countries, while Regnum Christi has more than 65,000 members around the world. The congregation and the lay movement are marked by apostolic zeal and vibrant orthodoxy. Both were strongly supported by Pope John Paul II.

As with other new movements in the history of the Church, the Legion and its lay association have had their share of critics. In addition to those who disliked the Legion's firm adherence to Church authority, there were those who accused it of being elitist, secretive, and excessively interested in cultivating the rich in order to fund its ambitious program of building educational and other institutions. Much of the criticism, I expect, is generated by envy of the Legion's success, especially in attracting priestly vocations in a time when vocations to most other religious orders are in sharp decline. But there are additional dynamics in play.

Fr. Maciel retired from active leadership in 2005. Beginning in the 1990s, a number of charges of sexual

wrongdoing, related to alleged events in the 1940s and 1950s, were brought against Fr. Maciel by former members of the Legion. The CDF conducted an investigation of the charges, but because of Fr. Maciel's fragile health and advanced age of eighty-six, it did not conduct a canonical hearing. Since there was no canonical hearing, there is no canonical judgment of his guilt or innocence regarding the alleged wrongdoings.

The most precise statement of what has happened, I believe, is that, in the judgment of the CDF and the pope, it is in the best interests of the Church, the Legion, and Fr. Maciel that he relinquish his public ministry and devote the remainder of his life to penitence and prayer. It should be noted that "penitence" in this connection need not connote punishment for the wrongdoing of which he was accused. All Christians are to be engaged in penitence and prayer. At the same time, the invitation to remove himself from public ministry is undeniably a form of censure. Making a clear distinction between the founder and the work he launched and led, the Vatican statement also said that "the worthy apostolate of the Legionaries of Christ and of the association Regnum Christi is gratefully recognized."

Although I have no formal connection with the Legion or Regnum Christi, I have over the years been a strong supporter of both. They have in the past, do now, and will, I pray, in the future provide vibrant apostolates in the service of Christ and his Church. When the charges against Fr. Maciel first surfaced, I studied the matter with care and had detailed discussions with knowledgeable people on all sides of the ensuing controversy. I then said that I was "morally certain" that the charges were false. Moral certitude, it should be noted, is a very high degree of probability that justifies action but is short of certitude described as absolute, mathematical, or metaphysical.

I do not know all that the CDF and the Holy Father know and am not privy to the considerations that led to their decision. It is reasonable to believe that they concluded that Fr. Maciel did do something very seriously wrong. To censure publicly, toward the end of his life, the founder of a large and growing religious community is an extraordinary, perhaps unprecedented, measure in Catholic history. Moreover, because the only public and actionable charges against Fr. Maciel had to do with sexual abuse, the clear implication is that that was the reason for the censure. In view of the public knowledge of the charges, it is not plausible that he was censured for some other and unknown reason.

The official statement of the Legion says: "Fr. Maciel, with the spirit of obedience to the Church that has always characterized him, has accepted this communiqué with faith, complete serenity, and tranquility of conscience, knowing that it is a new cross that God,

the Father of Mercy, has allowed him to suffer and that will obtain many graces for the Legion of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement. The Legionaries of Christ and the members of Regnum Christi, following the example of Fr. Maciel and united to him, accept and will accept always the directives of the Holy See with a profound spirit of obedience and faith. We renew our commitment to work with great intensity to live our charism of charity and extend the Kingdom of Christ serving the Church."

The Legion statement also says, "Facing the accusations made against him, [Fr. Maciel] declared his innocence and, following the example of Christ, decided not to defend himself in any way." The venerable spiritual tradition being invoked here is that of purification through suffering, in the confidence that Fr. Maciel will one day be vindicated. It must in fairness be noted that there is ample historical precedent of holy men and women who were unjustly treated by church authorities. That possibility cannot be categorically excluded in the instance of Fr. Maciel.

It was hardly the only factor, but one of the many factors that entered into my earlier judgment regarding Fr. Maciel's innocence was my great respect for John Paul II and his repeated statements of support for the Legion and its founder. It also seemed to me that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to adjudicate fairly charges based on various stories about what happened fifty and sixty years ago. With similar respect for the office and person of Pope Benedict, I cannot protest the directive implying that Fr. Maciel is guilty of grave wrongdoing. Again, it is obvious that the CDF and the Holy Father know more than I know with respect to evidence supporting the guilt or innocence of Fr. Maciel.

What We Know

When the Vatican communiqué was issued, the *New York Times* reported that I continued to believe that the charges were "groundless." That is not true. The fact is that I simply do not know, and none of us may ever know for sure. We can be sure that the CDF and the Holy Father did not act without good reason. Some of the accusers and the reporters who have been publicizing their cause for years suggest that their claims have been entirely vindicated. That, too, is not true. As others among the accusers have complained, the Vatican communiqué does not state any findings of guilt. Things are left in the realm of implication and inference.

This is not how the Church is ordinarily supposed to operate. Ecclesiastical procedures are supposed to be a "mirror of justice" in which accusations, evidence, and judgment are clear to all concerned. It is not explained

why age and fragility of health precluded a canonical procedure. Reliable sources say that, to their knowledge, Fr. Maciel is in reasonably good health. After years of the mishandling of sex-abuse accusations by bishops in this country, there is a widespread and understandable skepticism about whether either accusers or accused are treated justly. In the extraordinary instance of Fr. Maciel, we are asked simply to accept the decision of the CDF and the Holy Father. This faithful Catholics will readily do, although not without noting that no luster has been added to the mirror of justice.

Now comes a time of daunting challenges for the Legionaries of Christ. At the highest level of the Church's leadership, a deep shadow has been cast over their founder. In view of his age and the way the decision was made, it is almost certain that the shadow will not be lifted in his lifetime, if ever. In the historical experience of religious orders, the founder and the *charism*—meaning the distinctive spirituality by which the community is formed—cannot be easily separated. The Legion has been particularly intense in its devotion to its founder, who has been revered as a living saint. It is understandable that Legionaries who have known Fr. Maciel for many years simply cannot bring themselves to believe that he is guilty of the charges that have been brought against him. Whether misplaced or not, such devotion is not untouched by honor and faithfulness to a father and friend. But, in the future of the Legion and Regnum Christi, belief in the innocence of Fr. Maciel cannot be made an article of faith.

Nor is it helpful to speak of the Holy See's decision as yet another cross imposed on Fr. Maciel and the Legion. A "cross" may mean any burden to be borne, but, in this context, "bearing the cross" clearly suggests a wrong or injustice. The cross imposed on Christ was unjustly imposed. To continue to speak of the censure as a cross imposed could have the effect of putting the Legion on a collision course with the papacy. At the heart of the congregation's charism is wholehearted adherence to the ministry of Peter among us. The leadership of the Legion has unambiguously reaffirmed that adherence in a private audience with the pope following the censure of Fr. Maciel.

Again, it is possible that Fr. Maciel is entirely innocent. Popes, too, make mistakes. I have heard it proposed by more than one friend of the Legion that the pope, faced with the publicity of the charges and the impossibility of adjudicating the matter to anyone's satisfaction, simply asked Fr. Maciel to take a bullet for the sake of the Church, and Fr. Maciel agreed. However messy, that at least would dispose of the matter. That explanation is, I believe, quite implausible. Not least because it would be a grave disservice of the truth to

clearly imply, as the decision does clearly imply, that an innocent Fr. Maciel is guilty, at least in part, of the wrongdoing of which he was accused.

The future of the Legion and Regnum Christi cannot depend on the innocence or guilt of Fr. Maciel. Founder and charism may not be entirely separable, but they can be clearly distinguished. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," said St. Paul. That Fr. Maciel may have been much more earthen than was believed by those who admired him does not negate the treasure of what God did through him, including the spiritual writings so valued by the Legion. "By their fruits you shall know them," said Our Lord. The mighty works of God that have been done and are being done by the Legionaries and Regnum Christi are manifest to all whose vision is not clouded by prejudice.

Obviously, I care deeply about this movement of the Spirit, and I know that many readers share that devotion. I have over the years encountered in the Legion and Regnum Christi priests and laypeople as faithful, joyful, dedicated, and talented as any it has ever been my blessing to know. The months and years ahead must be a time of profound self-examination, reform, and renewal. Earnestly and confidently I pray, and invite all to pray, that the magnificent apostolates of the Legion of Christ and Regnum Christi will continue to flourish in the service of Christ and his Church.

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BONHOEFFER TODAY

Totalitarian movements, such as National Socialism, seek to reorganize the entirety of human life. Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was killed for his resistance to the Nazis, believed that there was a deeper resistance built into the order of nature. Bonhoeffer was ambivalent toward the tradition of "natural law," insisting that the natural order must be understood Christocentrically, that is, in relation to God's saving purposes in Christ. But there is no doubt that he had a profound respect for the natural, as is evident in the following from his *Ethics*:

The fact that it is at all possible to injure the natural is adequately explained by the relative liberty of the preserved life. In the abuse of this relative liberty some given entity within the fallen world posits itself as an absolute, declares itself to be the source of the natural, and thereby disintegrates the natural life. There now begins a struggle between the unnatural and the natural, in which the unnatural may for a time forcibly prevail, for the unnatural consists essentially in organization, and the

natural cannot be organized but is simply there. It is possible, for example, to organize the undermining of children's respect for their parents, but respect for parents itself is simply practiced and cannot by its very nature be organized. For this reason the natural may be temporarily overcome by the unnatural. But in the long run every organization collapses, and the natural endures and prevails by its own inherent strength; for life itself is on the side of the natural. In the meanwhile, however, there may indeed have occurred serious disturbances and revolutionary changes in the external forms of life. But, so long as life continues, the natural will always reassert itself.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Eccentricities, and downright craziness, in judicial rulings on church-state questions are nothing new. One is sometimes inclined to think they are the norm. But in the annals of judicial curiosities, Judge Robert Pratt of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa is deserving of a special mention. The case is *Americans United for the Separation of Church and State v. Prison Fellowship Ministries*. The case has to do with InnerChange Freedom (IFI), a program sponsored by Prison Fellowship to reduce recidivism. Under a contract with the state of Iowa, similar to contracts with several other state prison systems, IFI works with prisoners to get their lives together before being released. Nobody disputes that the program is entirely voluntary and remarkably effective. The complaint of Americans United for a Naked Public Square is that the program involves—yes, you guessed it—spiritual counseling, Bible study, and prayer. Not only, ruled Judge Pratt, is this an establishment of religion (40 percent of IFI funding came from the state), but it is an establishment of a particularly sinister religion called evangelicalism. He ordered the program disbanded and the money returned to the state. Of course, the case will be appealed, but what is noteworthy is the way Judge Pratt (representing the state!) inserted himself into religious disputes, resulting in a violation of the free exercise guaranteed by the First Amendment. I'm afraid the judge is somewhat deranged or culpably ignorant, or maybe both, which may be a mitigating factor in his staggering arrogance.

■ Herewith a few items from Judge Pratt's opinion. Evangelicalism, he says, is "quite distinct from other self-described Christian faiths, such as Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, and Greek Orthodoxy . . . and is

also distinct from the beliefs held by self-described Protestant Christian denominations such as Lutheran, United Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian, again to name only a few." (One notes the oddity that Mormonism is named as solidly in the historic tradition of Christian faith.) The fact, of course, is that evangelicalism—understood in terms of being born again, believing in the Bible, and wanting to share one's faith with others—is widespread throughout Catholic and Protestant communities. Prison Fellowship's statement of faith, opines Judge Pratt, "contains beliefs common to many types of Christian groups, but it is also significantly different in many respects." Never mind that the statement of faith was cooperatively produced by Christians from a variety of denominations and in consultation with notables such as Avery Cardinal Dulles. "The evangelical Christian stance towards religious institutions is one of suspicion," says Judge Pratt. Exactly. Those evangelicals would never think of getting involved with institutions such as the Southern Baptist Convention, Focus on the Family, or for that matter, Prison Fellowship. Evangelicals are anti-Catholic and "contemptuous of Roman Catholic reliance on papal authority, Marian devotion, and veneration of the saints." You can be sure that an evangelical such as Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, would not be found dead cosponsoring anything like Evangelicals and Catholics Together. The judge continues: "The Prison Fellowship and InnerChange believe in the substitutionary and atoning death of Jesus, which reflects a legalistic understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus and is likewise not shared by many Christians." As if that isn't bad enough, they believe in the "literal, bodily resurrection of Christ," which, the judge notes, is a belief not shared by many non-evangelical Christians. The judge adds the clincher: "A key concept in Chuck Colson's writings is that people must be born again." Well, that does it. In sum, thirty-five of the forty pages of Judge Pratt's decision is given over to establishing that the evangelicalism to which Prison Fellowship and IFI are committed is a sinister, schismatic cult that is trying to entice prisoners into its clutches. Which is pretty much the caricature peddled by Americans United and uncritically repeated by Judge Robert Pratt. Never mind that prison authorities in Iowa, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Minnesota welcome the help of Prison Fellowship and IFI in dramatically reducing recidivism. The really interesting question here is why a federal judge thinks First Amendment law authorizes a court to make theological judgments about what kind of religion does, and what kind does not, pass muster for constitutional protection. The Supreme Court, it should be noted, has in recent years been moving toward greater clarity in

church-state law. As that movement advances, it may yet be recognized that the First Amendment religion clause is just that, one clause, with a “no establishment” provision entirely in the service of the goal of “free exercise.” When that happens, “Prattism” may be a term of choice in describing the past half-century of eccentricity and downright craziness.

■ Alas, poor Yale Divinity School, I knew it well. But let us not dwell on the greatness that was when our attention is invited to the squalor that is. The handsomely produced spring issue of *Reflections*, the divinity school’s journal of theology, so to speak, is devoted to “Sex and the Church.” I haven’t read all of it, but the message seems to be: Sex good, Church bad. The lead article is by a former Catholic priest turned psychologist, Daniel Helminiak, who is also the author of *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*. (Bible says homosexuality just fine.) He writes that “because our own spirit seems to operate from beyond ourselves, . . . people tend to attribute spiritual experiences to things outside of themselves, most commonly to ‘God.’ . . . I have attributed spirituality to an aspect of our own beings.” This, be assured, does not make theology irrelevant, since “fidelity to the human spirit could not but lead godward.” (Quite why he has to put “God” in quotation marks but not “godward” is unclear.) There are several other articles excoriating the churches for their blindness to the splendors of sodomy, and I haven’t gotten to the article titled “Are There Really Only Two Genders?” by Virginia Ramey Mollencott. Why do I think I know what her answer will be? The editor of *Reflections*, Jamie L. Manson, says it is hoped that the issue “will help religious communities undo the tragedy of Adam and Eve, by facing their our own [sic] sexuality, accepting it as a gift from God (and therefore very, very good), and re-integrating it into healthy and whole vision [sic] of themselves as body, mind, and spirit.” (Good diction is apparently not a requirement for editing the journal.) The Yale Divinity School of H. Richard Niebuhr, Hans Frei, Paul Holmer, and George Lindbeck taught that the Cross had something to do with the undoing of the tragedy of Adam and Eve, but that was back in the days when the school did not put “God” in quotes. Oh yes, there’s another article listed as “Black Church Homophobia: What to Do About It?” by Kelly Brown Douglas. I think she means homophobia and is strongly against it. I’m going to skip that one. Then there’s an article on “Homosexuality and Dr. Dobson” by Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, referring to Jim Dobson of Focus on the Family. It addresses the “hypermale” and the “hypo-male gay” and concludes with the observation that “folded into the production of an ever-instable [sic] normative masculinity is a potent

discourse on nature and grace.” No doubt, but don’t tell Dr. Dobson.

■ The last great liberal cause that now meets with almost universal approbation was the civil-rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. That began in 1956, now half a century ago. Since then, numerous causes have claimed the mantle of civil rights. Jesse Jackson extorts corporate payoffs in the name of Dr. King. Sundry feminists and gay activists claim to be the continuation of the movement, as do, with greater justice, pro-lifers. Now African-American Muslims, many of whom were converted to Islam in the American prison system, are joining with Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East to lay claim to the legacy of Selma, Bull Connor, and the great drama that was the civil rights movement. According to *Religion Watch*, African-American Muslims who once felt marginalized by other Muslims are now more prominent in the mosques because it is thought that they have experience with the discrimination now felt by Muslims in this country. The civil-rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s was a singular moment in American history that successfully addressed the singular American wrong of the legal segregation of American blacks. In subsequent years, it became the catchall symbol seized on by everybody who wanted the benefits of being recognized as a victim. One can imagine few more wrongheaded, implausible, and self-defeating strategies than for the several million Muslims in America to join with alienated blacks in blaming their problems on the consequences of slavery and segregation. Presumably, Muslims did not come to this country in order to be permanently marginalized.

■ It is common practice that cardinal archbishops who are in good health are allowed five or more years in office after the mandatory submission of a letter of resignation at age seventy-five. There is understandable speculation, therefore, about why the recent resignation of Theodore Cardinal McCarrick as archbishop of Washington was accepted so promptly. One claim is that Rome was displeased with his public statement that he had been extended for two more years. Another is that there was deep unhappiness with the curious way he represented to the American bishops the position of Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict) on Catholics in public office during the controversies of 2004. In any event, his resignation was accepted. McCarrick was generally popular in Washington. There is no doubt that he enjoyed a good press. There have been many events marking his retirement, and in June he held a “going-away lunch” for reporters at St. Matthew’s Cathedral. He said to the assembled jour-

nalists, "You told them I was a good person, and they believed you." Reporters are sometimes made uneasy by the suggestion that they have been used. When a cardinal is invested, he is reminded that his red robes represent the blood of the martyrs, and that he is to be prepared to bear witness to the truth, no matter how controversial, with apostolic zeal, even to the point of surrendering his life. One of the events surrounding McCarrick's leaving office was an interview with National Public Radio in which, according to the transcript of the program, he was asked about his understanding of leadership in the Church. As a leader, he said, "I make sure that I'm teaching what the Church teaches." That being said, he offered his guidelines for effective episcopal leadership. "You know, if the archbishop is a little on the left, he's not going to be able to talk to the right. If he's a little on the right, he's not going to be able to talk to the left. They won't trust him." With specific reference to John Kerry and other pro-abortion Catholics, he said, "And I think before you react so strongly and say, 'You're a sinner, you can't receive communion,' I think you have to really see what's in a person's heart. There is nothing really black and white, you know, because we're dealing with human beings and we're all such complex people." The interviewer observed that Pope Benedict has the reputation of being "quite a tough defender of the faith," to which McCarrick responds that he is, in fact, "very moderate." "I think the job of a priest always forces you to the middle," said the cardinal. Against those who say that means mediocrity, he says, "It's not. It's really courage to be able to stay in the middle and to resist the extremes." His style of middle-of-the-road leadership, he said, was inspired by the example of Pope John Paul II. He tells the story of John Paul visiting Newark, New Jersey, where McCarrick was then archbishop. At the entrance of the cathedral, John Paul "looks and he stops for a moment, and then he puts himself right in the middle and he walks down the aisle, right in the middle. And people on the left, people on the right, can grab his hand. For me, that is the symbol of where the Church has to be." The depiction of the late pope as a leader who declined to take sides is, one must acknowledge, an original contribution to the understanding of the man and his pontificate. What is missing from Cardinal McCarrick's view of leadership, one might respectfully suggest, is the distinction between placing oneself in the midst of the great questions of the time, which John Paul certainly did, and placing oneself in the middle of the great questions of the time, which he certainly did not. But there is no doubt that Cardinal McCarrick received a good press from those who were generally not on the Church's side. A farewell lunch to thank reporters for depicting

him as a good person seems only fitting. Philip Graham of the *Washington Post* once said that journalism is the first draft of history. As we all do well to remember, it is the final draft that counts.

■ *Christian Century*, which regularly and rightly deplores the fierce polarization in our public discourse, takes favorable note of the statement of Michelle Bachelet, the president of Chile who was jailed under the Pinochet regime: "Because I was the victim of hatred, I have dedicated my life to reverse that hatred and turn it into understanding, tolerance, and—why not say it—love." In the same issue, on the same page in fact, the editors refer to President Bush's approval of domestic wiretapping of terrorist suspects without requiring court warrants. This is compared to a 1934 speech by Adolf Hitler in which he said, "In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became supreme judge of the German people." Understanding, tolerance, and—why not say it—hate. Or is it not hateful to compare the president of the United States with Adolf Hitler?

■ Benedict XVI has received his report card from the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College, Alan Wolfe director. A day-long conference with members of the Boston College theology department—Thomas Groome, James Weiss, Mary Ann Hinsdale, and Kenneth Himes—examined the pope's first year and agreed that "Pope Benedict has so far shown great humility in his stewardship of the papal office, demonstrating a less autocratic, more self-effacing approach to his leadership of the Catholic Church in comparison to his predecessor." Dr. Himes said the first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, had good things to say on love but shortchanged social justice. Dr. Hinsdale issued the overall grade for the first year: C+++. The report from the Boisi Center does not say whether a resolution was passed to keep Benedict on for another year—on a continuing trial basis, of course.

■ Damon Linker's book is scheduled for release in September and I have seen an advance copy. An expanded version of Mr. Linker's long article in the *New Republic* of April 3, 2006, it is called *The Theocrats: Secular America Under Siege*. The message of the book is printed on the front of the dust jacket: "For the past three decades, a few determined men have worked to inject their radical religious ideas into the nation's politics. This is the story of how they succeeded." The "determined men" are those of us associated with FIRST THINGS. Mr. Linker provides a relentlessly tendentious commentary on items appearing in these pages. A point-by-point correction of the book's many

misrepresentations would be exceedingly tedious. A word is in order, however, on the origins of the book. Mr. Linker worked for *FIRST THINGS* from May 2001 through January 2005, first as associate editor and in his last year as editor. He was a speech writer for Rudolph Giuliani when he applied for the position as associate editor. At *FIRST THINGS* he was a cooperative colleague and gave no indication that he was not completely supportive of the mission of the magazine. During his years with us, the only policy concern he ever expressed to me was that he thought the magazine should be more critical of U.S. actions in the Middle East. That is a question on which colleagues can and did disagree without personal rancor. In the fall of 2004, he indicated to me that he was weary of the long commute to Connecticut and would like at some point to get a large enough advance for a book so that he could become a full-time writer. I was entirely sympathetic. A few weeks later, he told me he was thinking of writing a book about *FIRST THINGS* and its editor in chief. He explained that the book would be a critical appreciation of the achievements of the magazine. I said I would be happy to cooperate with such a project but I didn't think there would be enough interest in the subject to elicit a large advance from a publisher. Moreover, this would be a first book by a relatively unknown writer. In early December, he told me that several publishers had indicated intense interest in the book he was proposing and that Doubleday had offered an advance of \$160,000. He wanted to leave at the beginning of 2005 to start writing. Surprised but pleased by his good fortune, I congratulated him and renewed my offer to be of assistance with the book. I then said it might be helpful in that connection if I could see the proposal he had submitted to publishers. At this he blanched and, with obvious embarrassment, said that would not be possible. This was the first indication that he had agreed to write what in the publishing business is known as an "attack book," which, unfortunately, is the genre to which *The Theocons* belongs.

■ Some studies say 30 to 35 percent, others say 40 percent, of Catholics in the United States are Hispanic. Father Thomas Rausch of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles buys the higher figure in an informative article on "Ecumenism for America's Hispanic Christians." Slightly more than 70 percent of Latinos in this country are Catholic, and 77 percent of the others are Protestant of one kind or another, mainly evangelical and Pentecostal. The Catholic percentage drops with second- and third-generation immigrants, as does the number affiliated with any Christian community. Nonetheless, because of high birth rates and

continued immigration, the number of Latino Catholics continues to grow in absolute terms. Rausch writes, "Ecumenism begins with friendship," and laments the fact that Catholic and non-Catholic religious leaders do not know one another and do not work together in pressing publicly the social and moral issues on which they are, for the most part, in agreement. Of course, as Rausch notes, there is a long history of mutual antagonism between Catholics and Protestants that is rooted in centuries of Latin American history. Important in this connection, however, is the fact that many evangelicals and Pentecostals do not identify themselves by reference to the sixteenth-century conflicts, which makes ecumenism in this context different from theological dialogues with, for instance, Lutheran or Reformed Christians. A major problem in these newer non-Catholic movements is a lack of education in theology and Christian history. Rausch writes, "Though Latinos presently account for about 13 percent of the U.S. population, only 2.5 percent of divinity students across the country are Hispanic/Latino." Rausch observes, approvingly, that Catholic bishops have been in the forefront of advocating a more open immigration policy, while Latino ministries "are less accommodating to those here illegally, counseling them to obey U.S. immigration law." This deserves further exploration. David Martin and other students of evangelical and Pentecostal growth among Hispanics underscore that these ministries have a powerful effect in helping people straighten out their personal and family problems with alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, and loafing rather than working. Part of this is the inculcation of the importance of being law-abiding citizens. In being supportive of illegal immigrants, Rausch says, "The American bishops have taken the lead, but it would be good to find ways to do this ecumenically." It may be, on the other hand, that the U.S. bishops have something to learn from evangelical and Pentecostal leaders about the importance of observing the law. Fr. Rausch concludes: "The influx of Hispanics is changing the face of the American church. Despite the tensions that often exist between Hispanic Catholics and evangelical/Pentecostal Christians and their churches, the growing Hispanic presence might just lead to a revitalization of Christian life in the United States. Furthermore, they have many interests in common. It is important for them to find ways to work together not just for the unity of the disciples for which Christ prayed, but also for the life of faith in our secular American society."

■ In an interview with *Zenit*, Bishop Gerald Barnes, who heads the U.S. bishops' Committee on Refugees and Migrants, observes that Catholic social teaching

affirms the principle that “sovereign nations have the right, in fact the responsibility, to control their borders.” Also affirmed is the principle “that persons have a right to migrate to provide for themselves and their families.” “Where these two seemingly conflicting principles get reconciled is in the development and application of immigration laws that take into consideration a nation’s capacity to absorb newcomers, on the one hand, and the needs of migrants on the other. In other words, richer nations have a greater responsibility than do poorer nations in being open to immigrants.” Which very helpfully explains why Mexico is not having a big debate over admitting immigrants from the United States.

■ I have elsewhere drawn attention to the important book by Ramesh Ponnuru, *The Party of Death*. It is a carefully reasoned brief for the pro-life position, including a thoughtful evaluation of probable political problems and opportunities if or when the notorious *Roe v. Wade* decision is history. I also have great respect for Peter Berkowitz, but I am afraid that in his review of the book for the *Wall Street Journal*, he misses key aspects of Ponnuru’s argument. There is an apparently little matter of language when, for instance, Berkowitz writes, “From conception, [Ponnuru] says, the embryo is entitled to the full complement of human rights.” The idea that human beings are entitled to rights is odd. Human beings possess rights that we are obliged to respect. To Ponnuru’s claim that the present regime is one of abortion on demand because of the “health of the mother” exception decreed by the court, Berkowitz responds that only 1 percent of abortions are procured in the third trimester. The relevance of that datum is far from obvious. The Supreme Court has affirmed abortion on demand—or, if one prefers, an unlimited abortion license—that includes the killing of the child in the very process of its leaving the birth canal (partial birth abortion). But the gravamen of Berkowitz’s argument is this: “It doesn’t matter to Mr. Ponnuru that this argument flies in the face of a complex intuition that seems to underlie the American ambivalence. . . . The early embryo, though surely part of the human family, is distant and different enough from a flesh-and-blood newborn that when the early embryo’s life comes into conflict with other precious human goods or claims, the embryo’s life may need to give way.” Ponnuru offers principled moral, political, and philosophical arguments; Berkowitz responds with opinion polling dressed up as a “complex intuition” that it is sometimes permissible to kill an innocent member of the human family. Ponnuru’s error, says Berkowitz, is in “attempting to judge the complexities of morals and politics through the reductive

lens of natural science, under the bright light of pure reason, from the cold heights of abstract theory.” Rather, he says, we must “acknowledge the ambiguities, mysteries, and tragic choices of lived experience.” In fact, the lived experience of abortion in America over the last three decades is the result of the muddled rationalism imposed by the Court in *Roe* and subsequent decisions. Before that, almost all Americans agreed, and still today most Americans agree, that it is a grave wrong to kill babies still in the womb. Like Sandra Day O’Connor in *Casey*, Berkowitz suggests that the defense of the abortion license of three decades, rather than of the moral consensus and law of centuries, is the conservative position. This is, to put it gently, unpersuasive. In the next few months, Evangelicals and Catholics Together will be issuing a statement, “That They May Have Life,” that addresses these and related questions in considerable detail. Meanwhile, I recommend a careful reading of Ramesh Ponnuru’s *The Party of Death*.

■ What is it to be a priest? The catechism quotes the fourth-century St. Gregory of Nazianzus, who wrote this as a young priest: “We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify, lead by the hand and counsel prudently. I know whose ministers we are, where we find ourselves and to where we strive. I know God’s greatness and man’s weakness, but also his potential. [The priest] is the defender of truth, who stands with angels, gives glory with archangels, causes sacrifices to rise to the altar on high, shares Christ’s priesthood, refashions creation, restores it in God’s image, recreates it for the world on high and, even greater, is divinized and divinizes.” Great stuff, you might well say. Not according to “Creating Safe and Sacred Places,” a text published by St. Mary’s Press and being used in the “safe-environment programs” of some Catholic high schools. There we are told that St. Gregory’s understanding of priesthood had the unhappy result that “the priest functioned in an office and role that could not allow him to be anything but what that office and role dictated.” Little wonder that priests are a little odd and sometimes do bad things with boys in their charge. The Church’s teaching about ordination—“indelible mark” and all that—results in psychological and emotional crippling. Moreover, the text offers a skewed and thoroughly non-theological account of priestly celibacy, as though designed to discourage any young man discerning a vocation. That is not to mention its depiction of “normative” teen and adult sexual practices without reference to sin and forgiveness. The same experts who for

years undermined Catholic teaching are now presented as the experts on remedying the consequences. Then and now, they would have us understand that the problem is excessive fidelity. Gregory's view of priesthood, we are told, is not an aspiration toward holiness but an imposed restraint and confinement. But why, except to be something other than a priest, would a priest want to be something other than the office and role to which he is ordained? A wise old bishop once told me that he was not much impressed by all the talk about priestly "burnout." "In my experience," he said, "most of those who claim to be suffering from burnout were never on fire to begin with."

■ In the last issue of *FIRST THINGS*, in the course of setting the record straight on "black legends" about the Inquisition, I wrote, "Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying the Inquisition was a good thing." Which prompted a reader to remind me of Boswell's recounting of a stagecoach ride of Friday, August 5, 1763. Among the other passengers was "an elderly gentleman who talked violently against the Roman Catholics, and of the horrors of the Inquisition. . . . To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could talk upon any side of a question, [Dr. Johnson] defended the Inquisition, and maintained that 'false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance; that the civil power should unite with the church in punishing those who dared to attack the established religion; and that such only were punished by the Inquisition.'" Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that Dr. Johnson was right.

■ I mentioned a while back that the South Korean government had issued a postage stamp honoring the Dr. Hwang whose research in human cloning and related perversities was later exposed as fraudulent. The stamp was promptly withdrawn, but a reader sent me a copy he had obtained. It depicts a man in a wheelchair who slowly rises, begins to run, and then leaps joyfully in the air. Perhaps the stamp's designer had listened to John Edwards, the 2004 vice-presidential candidate, talking about the happy future of Christopher Reeves if only we got over our scruples about creating and killing embryos. The widespread hype about the alleged promise of cloning and embryonic stem cell research resists challenge by facts.

■ One wishes it were not necessary to mention it again, but apparently some people are, as it is said, in deep denial about the connection between homosexuality and priestly sex abuse. The *National Catholic Reporter* takes the Catholic League to task for saying that, over the many years studied, 81 percent of the victims were

male and 14 percent were under ten years old. That is not the claim of the Catholic League. It is on page 29 of the 2005 annual *Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* mandated by the bishops. Dr. Paul McHugh, former psychiatrist in chief at Johns Hopkins and an original member of the National Review Board, says, "This behavior was homosexual predation on American Catholic youth, yet it's not being discussed." The *National Catholic Reporter* also criticizes the League for saying that "it is estimated that the rate of sexual abuse of public school students is more than 100 times the abuse by priests." The editors say that "virtually no serious research on the topic has been carried out." In fact, the U.S. Department of Education in 2004 issued a report, "Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature." The estimate cited is by the author of the report, Dr. Charol Shakeshaft of Hofstra University. In responding to the *National Catholic Reporter* editorial, Dr. William Donohue of the League notes the common claim that the reason unfaithful priests abuse boys is not homosexual orientation but the fact that they do not have access to girls. Girls became altar servers in 1994. According to the report on the more recent abuses, the same 81 percent of abuse cases involved boys. But this numbers-crunching is wearisome and the entire subject distinctly unedifying. What must not be obscured, however, is the homosexuality factor in the sex-abuse crisis, which helps explain Rome's instruction of last November with respect to admitting to seminary or ordaining men with deep-seated homosexual desires.

■ Here's an incident that nicely compounds a number of issues. Free speech, for instance. Socialized medicine, for another. Above all, the truth that dare not speak its pain. According to the BBC, Edward Atkinson, a seventy-five-year-old man in King's Lynn, Norfolk, was on a waiting list for a hip operation at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. Atkinson is anti-abortion, and he started mailing the hospital pictures of aborted babies. Ruth May, chief executive of the hospital, said, "Our legal advisers were consulted and their opinion was that this man's actions contravened NHS Zero Tolerance policy in cases of abuse or unacceptable behaviour towards our staff." The hip operation is off. "We take such matters extremely seriously," said May, "and because he continued to send extremely graphic material to us we exercised our right to decline treatment to him for anything other than life-threatening conditions." In addition, the Swaffham Magistrates Court sentenced Atkinson to twenty-eight days in jail for "sending offensive literature" to the hospital staff. There once was an England.

■ Lest there be any misunderstanding, some of my best friends live and work in Washington. But Washington is, in the final analysis, a provincial company town. Of course, people come from all over the country and the world to be there, but it has only one business and one reason for being, namely, politics. Whereas New York, as my friends are tired of hearing me say, is worlds within worlds. This is brought to mind by a special issue of *New York* magazine devoted to "The Influentials"—the people who, according to the editors, lead the capital of the world through their "ideas, power, and sheer will." The editors say they spent eight months sorting through possible candidates and vetting names in hundreds of conversations with movers and shakers. The fifty-seven-page feature has numerous categories: art, architecture, books, classical dance, movies, music, theater, television and radio, media, politics, law, Wall Street, real estate, advertising, technology, fashion, scenesters (the party circuit), sports, philanthropy, ideas, education, religion, and health. I'm listed as one of five in the "ideas" category. Testimony to New York being worlds within worlds is the fact that I've probably heard of a tenth of the "influentials" chosen, and I'm rather sure that fewer than a tenth have ever heard of me. But people do love lists.

■ The person who eschews authorities, claiming to think for himself, is, more often than not, a fool. This thought is prompted by a splendid testimonial by Fouad Ajami on the occasion of Bernard Lewis' ninetieth birthday. I first came to know Prof. Lewis in the early 1990s before he was as renowned (outside academic circles of Orientalism) as he is today. He is a gentleman who wears his erudition lightly, lacing it with a wit that does not disguise his fervent devotion to Western civilization and the imperative of understanding the worlds of Islam. Ajami, who teaches at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies, writes: "We anoint sages when we need them; at times we let them say, on our behalf, the sorts of things we know and intuit but don't say, the sorts of things we glimpse through the darkness but don't fully see. It was thus in the time of the great illusion, in the lost decade of the 1990s, when history had presumably 'ended,' that Bernard Lewis had come forth to tell us, in a seminal essay, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' (September 1990), that our luck had run out, that an old struggle between 'Christendom' and Islam was gathering force. (Note the name given the Western world; it is vintage Lewis, this naming of worlds and drawing of borders—and differences.) It was the time of commerce and globalism; the 'modernists' had the run of the decade, and a historian's dark premonitions about a thwarted civilization wishing to avenge the slights and wounds of

centuries would not carry the day. Mr. Lewis was the voice of conservatives, a brooding pessimist, in the time of a sublime faith in things new and untried. It was he, in that 1990 article, who gave us the notion of a 'clash of civilizations' that Samuel Huntington would popularize, with due attribution to Bernard Lewis." Lewis helps us to understand the anguish of Islam and why it seems to lack the conceptual means for relieving that anguish, and thus the resulting anger. Ajami writes: "A pain afflicts modern Islam—the loss of power. And Mr. Lewis has a keen sense of the Muslim redeemers and would-be avengers who promise to alter Islam's place in the world. This pain, the historians tell us, derives from Islam's early success, from the very triumph of the prophet Muhammad. Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land; he had led his people through wilderness. Jesus had been crucified. But Muhammad had prevailed and had governed. The faith he would bequeath his followers would forever insist on the oneness of religion and politics. Where Christians are enjoined in their scripture to 'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's,' no such demarcation would be drawn in the theory and practice of Islam." Lewis is harshly criticized in some circles for having encouraged the Bush administration to believe that it is possible to advance decent government in the Arab world. Ajami observes: "We have come to a great irony: the conservative Orientalist holding out democratic hope for Iraq and its Arab neighbors, while his liberal critics assert the built-in authoritarianism of the Arab political tradition." Ajami concludes: "We travel by the light of his work. He weaves for us a web between past and present, and he can pick out, over distant horizons, storms sure to reach us before long." We have paid careful attention to the work of Bernard Lewis in these pages. If you have not already done so, you would not go wrong in reading his *What Went Wrong?* and then moving on to *The Crisis of Islam*.

■ Just how tired is the tired old Left of Catholic revolutionism? One answer is found in Robert Blair Kaiser's new book, *A Church in Search of Itself*. According to a promotional email Kaiser recently sent, the book "is selling beyond the expectations of my editor at Knopf." Which, meaning no unkindness, perhaps says a lot about his editor's expectations. But Kaiser says the book is doing very well. "Not exactly sure why," he writes. "Maybe it's the writing." Then he adds, "Maybe it's the candid reporting." Finally, "I choose to think many value the book most because it shows how the people of God can take back their Church." By taking back the Church, he means that the American Church ("AmChurch") should be

autochthonous, which is to say, independent of external control. He has been speaking to friendly groups around the country, including Voice of the Faithful, and reports that the response is enthusiastic. "I can say they were all impressed with the notion that we can all be most thoroughly accountable to one another in an autochthonous American Church, one that could be launched at some future national synod where elected delegates could create a constitution for the Church modeled on the U.S. Constitution. Craggy-faced Bill Callahan, S.J., now 80, his eyes twinkling, said "This seems like something we should try. It will be fun." If he has dear old Father Callahan on board, you know the revolution is well underway. Studies show, writes Kaiser, "that the many are smarter than an elite few." On the other hand, he's counting on the elite few, noting that "some five percent" of the people of the Philippines overthrew dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and "only a half dozen English lords" forced the signing of the Magna Carta. Nobody knows, he says, "what critical mass it would take to force our own Magna Carta on the American bishops." He allows that "we have to get a huge assist from the media and the Internet." In that connection, he was disappointed with a *Washington Post* reporter whom he tried to recruit. The reporter "blanched, perhaps unwilling to think of himself as an adjutant in the cause of revolution." Kaiser, who has written from Rome for *Time* and *Newsweek*, has a different view of the journalist's task. "Objectivity? That's the curse of a newspaperman's job. Fortunately, as a correspondent for *Time*, with only mild objections from my chief of correspondents, my reporting at Vatican II gave aid and comfort to the forces of change." He concludes: "For those who are interested in the whole plan, please go to our new website www.takebackourchurch.org. If you understand what we are trying to do, please sign up for the revolution." I do understand what you're trying to do, Bob, I really do. Yes, I know it was great fun back in the 1960s, but it really is time for a rest. Just close your eyes and keep repeating to yourself *autochthonous, autochthonous, autochthonous* . . . zzzzz. Forty years of revolution do take it out of a man.

■ *Religion Watch*, as the name suggests, is a monthly potpourri of things notable and odd on the religion front. Here are instances from the current issue. *Item*: Only 12 percent of Americans say that evolution is "definitely true," while 32 percent say it is "definitely not true." Avoiding the trap of the Dover, Pennsylvania, case, school boards around the country are allowing teachers to discuss in science classes questions about and alternatives to evolution, so long as they don't promote specific theories such as Intelligent

Design. *Item*: Evangelical leaders are embracing internationalism in U.S. foreign policy, but activists are overwhelmingly focused on domestic questions. No surprise there. *Item*: A Dutch sociologist has found that immigrant men are more religiously engaged than immigrant women. It probably has something to do with most immigrants in the Netherlands being Muslim. *Item*: Even when they're several generations removed and there have been ethnically mixed marriages, people with a few Irish genes make a point of saying they're Irish. Protestants in the South do it to identify with Irish support for the American Revolution and nineteenth-century revivalism, while Catholics in the North apparently think being Irish makes them more Catholic. *Item*: Only 11 percent of American Jews are Orthodox, but of those under eighteen it may be 20 percent or more. And they're the ones more likely to have babies, meaning Judaism in the future will be more Orthodox. *Item*: A mathematician has figured out that both Protestantism and Catholicism in the United Kingdom are at the "extinction tipping point," and the more liberal forms of Protestantism will likely be extinct before mid-century. *Item*: The Church of England is adopting an approach called "Fresh Expressions," which means offering different worship styles. "Among the new worship expressions are a skateboard park church, services which adapt the music of the club scene, cell groups, and a 'Rolling Church,' with no fixed starting and ending times." That should do the trick. *Item*: German Catholics are selling off churches but are reluctant to let them be turned into mosques "due to the symbolical impact such a change of owner would create." That's putting it delicately. From another source, not *Religion Watch*, I see that Muslims have become squatters in Catholic churches in Belgium, moving the altar and draping statues of Mary and other items that might be offensive to Islamic sensibilities. Cardinal Godfried Danneels is reported to have welcomed them. It seems the churches were not being used for much of anything else. He has also urged that Muslims should have their own Reformation and French Revolution in order to cultivate tolerance and a modern approach to religion's role in society. These experiences have done wonders for Christianity in Europe.

■ Former president Jimmy Carter has written another book on American values. He is deeply saddened by the way the "religious right" uses religion for partisan political purposes. In an interview with an Atlanta magazine, he explains his concern: "Carter fittingly used a parable to illustrate how he'd like to see the political/religious debate unfold. 'I was teaching a Sunday school class two weeks ago,' he recalls. 'A girl, she

was about 16 years old from Panama City [Fla.], asked me about the differences between Democrats and Republicans. 'I asked her, "Are you for peace, or do you want more war?" Then I asked her, "Do you favor government helping the rich, or should it seek to help the poorest members of society? Do you want to preserve the environment, or do you want to destroy it? Do you believe this nation should engage in torture, or should we condemn it? Do you think each child today should start life responsible for \$28,000 in [federal government] debt, or do you think we should be fiscally responsible?" I told her that if she answered all of those questions, that she believed in peace, aiding the poor and weak, saving the environment, opposing torture, . . . then I told her, 'You should be a Democrat.' " Jimmy Carter is deeply saddened by the way religion is used for partisan political purposes.

■ If, as the Society of Jesus has formally resolved, justice is the "priority of priorities" and understood as being constitutive of the gospel, the fourteen Jesuit law schools in this country have a grave problem. So says John M. Breen, who teaches law at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He recalls a young woman in her final year of law school who tells him that his class was the first time she was engaged by a meaningful discussion of justice. Of course, Loyola and other Jesuit law schools make provisions for clinical experiences in which students work with poor people in dealing with housing, family, and other problems. But so does almost every other law school in the country. Education in justice requires more. Breen writes, "A Jesuit law school that does not require its students to engage in a rigorous examination of justice that includes a serious engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition will offer a legal education that is 'distinctive' in only marginal ways, if at all. Triumphant claims to the contrary notwithstanding, such a school will no more 'challenge the mainstream' of American legal education than Disney challenges the mainstream of American culture or McDonald's challenges the mainstream of the American diet. Such a school may treat its students more humanely, perhaps offering them more opportunities for service projects and campus liturgies. These sorts of activities cannot, however, compensate for such a fundamental omission." His conclusion is unequivocal: "If Jesuit law schools continue to fail to engage the tradition which inspired their creation, then they should cease to go by the name 'Jesuit' or 'Catholic.' Truth in advertising would require as much. If, however, Jesuit law schools take up this tradition in earnest, then what are now mere slogans might in fact accurately describe the kind of education they seek to convey and the kind of graduates they hope to pro-

duce. If Jesuit law schools see it as their obligation to introduce students to the Catholic intellectual tradition—the tradition which Martin Luther King Jr. relied on in his struggle for civil rights, which refuted the evils of European fascism and Soviet totalitarianism, and which challenges the individualism and materialism of liberal democracies today—then they will offer law students something which secular schools do not. Then they can realistically hope to form 'men and women for others.' Then the life of these institutions, including Loyola, can again be *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*."

■ Hugh Hefner of *Playboy* shame is eighty, and he is turning philosophical about his luminous legacy as a public benefactor. He is "the luckiest cat on the planet" for having so richly (and justly) benefited from having bestowed on humanity the gift of liberation from sexual repression. Matthew Scully, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, is not persuaded: "Enough to say that police investigators, in the sex-crimes units that have expanded roughly in proportion to mass-market 'adult material,' rarely conclude that the rapist or child predator lacked for pornographic inspiration before committing the crime. As to those 'major beneficiaries' of porn, you won't find too many women these days who think that the world is better because of *Playboy* or the smug, selfish ethic it has always purveyed. For good reason has the Playboy Foundation long been a benefactor to NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood: The Playboy Philosophy has always been for the ladies, too, all right—just as long as they remember what they're good for, don't get too sentimental and feel grateful when the playboy in their own life offers to pay for the abortion. One hesitates to speak harshly of an old man, who somewhere along the way must have done a few worthwhile things. But as to the public legacy of Hugh Hefner, he should have no illusions. All of us have our share of faults and sins to account for. But the lowest of vices and 'strangest secret of hell,' as G.K. Chesterton called it, is the desire to pervert others, to coax and corrupt them and drag them down with you. And any man who at the age of 80 has that to answer for is by no stretch the luckiest cat on the planet." There are several fine lines there, but I've filed this for future use: The Playboy Philosophy is good for the ladies, too, "just so long as they remember what they're good for."

■ "I'm so sorry for Tom Fox's death and the Fox's family's grief, but it seems to me that the people in CPT should not see this as defeat but simply as the cost of being faithful to the mission of peacemaking the world desperately needs." The speaker is Ronald Sider,

founder of Evangelicals for Social Action and professor of theology at Palmer Seminary in Pennsylvania. Fox was one of the hostages taken captive by jihadists in Iraq, and CPT means the "Christian Peacemaker Teams." The other hostages captured with Fox were freed by the coalition forces, whose presence in Iraq they were protesting. In this *Christianity Today* interview, Sider is asked about the criticism that CPT is "speaking out only against American violence and ignoring the violence perpetrated by radical Muslims in the country." Sider responds that "any group of people, finite as we are, is sometimes going to get things wrong," but the CPT bias must be understood in light of the fact that "the vast majority of Christian insight on the war was that it was premature, it was wrong, it didn't fit just-war criteria." (In this connection, he gravely misrepresents the position of the Holy See, but let that pass.) Sider's commitment is to the power of "nonviolent campaigns," and he points to the victories of Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King in the United States, Solidarity in defeating the Soviet Union, and the Philippine overthrow of Marcos. Lumping together these radically different historical events as demonstrating the power of nonviolence does not bear close examination. Sider ends on the note that people should in the next year "put a thousand CPT kinds of people all through the West Bank to say to the Israelis and Palestinians, 'You have to stop killing each other. There has to be two states here that are fair and just.'" The implied moral symmetry between Israelis and Palestinians is, to put it gently, deeply confused. There is a widespread tendency to excuse, usually in a condescending mode, people such as Sider and those involved in CPT as being excessively "idealistic." But, however much one may criticize some Israeli reactions to Palestinian aggressions, Israel is formally committed to the goal of two states living together in fairness and justice. Palestinian leadership is formally committed to the elimination of Israel. Whether with respect to the Middle East or conflicts elsewhere, what appears to be culpable ignorance or deliberate mendacity should not be described as excessive idealism. The willingness to die for a cause, even a wrongheaded cause, is always impressive. But there is something unseemly about a theology professor, or any professor, taking it on himself to urge young people to risk getting killed in the service of his political views, even were his views much better informed than Ronald Sider's.

■ "Is it possible to think a man the anti-Christ and also thoughtful and courageous?" That is the question posed by the editors of the *Nicotine Theological Journal*. "This is the predicament that confronts many conservative Presbyterians and Reformed [Calvinist]

Christians when they consider the work and legacy of John Paul II." Such Christians profess the sixteenth-century creeds that say the pope is the Antichrist, but the pope declines to cooperate. The pope "no longer breathes fire, wears horns, or even anathematizes Protestants." This, say the editors, poses a "conundrum," as in an intricate and difficult problem. At the death of John Paul, they were offended by "the Protestant swooning over a Roman pontiff." It was at least "excessive," they say, suggesting that moderate swooning may have been permissible. Some of the contributors to the little symposium on this question are more stringent. On the great moral issues of our time, complains D.G. Hart, evangelical Protestants were wavering and divided and "seemed to be willing to rely on the extraordinary ability and connections of the bishop of Rome." "The Bible seems to have run out of gas for Protestants as an authoritative guide to truth. Instead the imposing voice of one person in a high-profile office (which happens to be in Vatican City) appears to be more effective in countering the drift of secularism and relativism." William Smith of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America asks, "Where's the pope?" He answers: "If we regard as heaven-bound those whom we [Reformed Christians] receive into communicant membership and those whom other evangelical churches receive, then do we not regard the others to be, so far as we know, hell-bound? When we apply the liberal and charitable standards by which Presbyterian churches have judged who are Christians, the pope was not one. . . . He held no membership in an evangelical church on earth." That is *extra ecclesia nulla salus* with a twist. "He was a good man," Smith writes, "a courageous man, a pious man, an admirable man, a man who did much good in his lifetime." A pity he wasn't a Christian. A pope so manifestly good poses a threat to Calvinist orthodoxy. Protestants guilty of excessive swooning over John Paul need to be reminded that he is probably in hell. The writers do not say it, but one infers that they hope Pope Benedict will be more accommodating by breathing fire, wearing horns, or at least anathematizing them. It is intolerably confusing when popes refuse to follow the script written by sixteenth-century Protestants.

■ It was not until 1974 that Chicago removed "the ugly law" from its municipal code. The law read: "No person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object or improper person to be allowed in or on the public ways or other public places in this city, or shall therein or thereon expose himself to public view, under a penalty of not less than \$1 nor more than \$50 for each offense." That intelligence is supplied by Cathleen

Kaveny, professor of law at Notre Dame, in a paper describing how different views of law affect both the pro-life and pro-choice movements. Law, she notes, is not only to prevent and punish crimes but to teach morality. She contrasts the Chicago “ugly law” (similar laws were on the books in other cities) with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, which aims at ensuring that everybody has access to public space and economic opportunity. So there is such a thing as moral progress, although its course is painfully uneven. Kaveny notes the many crisis-pregnancy centers operated by pro-lifers and urges that more attention be paid the pertinent social and economic factors: “Women with incomes below 200 percent of poverty made up 30 percent of all women of reproductive age but accounted for 57 percent of the abortions in 2000. Abortion rates decreased as women’s income increased, from 44 per 1,000 pregnancies among poor women to 10 per 1,000 among the highest-income women. Adjusting for different pregnancy rates, it is still the case that high-income women are the least likely to abort their pregnancies (15 percent) and poor and low-income women were the most likely to do so (33 percent). Furthermore, only one in six women who had an abortion was married. Nearly one in five women who had an abortion were teenagers; about half of them were younger than 25.” We need to attend, says Kaveny, to all the laws and other factors that affect abortion. “Does this mean that overturning *Roe* isn’t important? No. In my view, however, it is important as much for pedagogical reasons as practical reasons. *Roe* and most of the Supreme Court cases that followed it did not merely legalize abortion in ‘hard cases’; they did not present abortion as a drastic option to be considered only ‘in necessity and sorrow.’ Instead, they effectively denied it was morally problematic, for years striking down legislative effort after legislative effort to encourage women to choose childbirth over abortion. The apex of this deeply mistaken pedagogy can be found in Justice

William Brennan’s claim that ‘[A]bortion and childbirth, when stripped of the sensitive moral arguments surrounding the abortion controversy, are simply two alternative medical methods of dealing with pregnancy.’ The fundamental task facing the pro-life movement now as it reaches maturity is to demonstrate how deeply mistaken Justice Brennan’s view is. The law can’t strip out ‘sensitive moral arguments’ for either the woman or the unborn child. And we can’t strip out consideration of moral virtues either. The fundamental challenge facing the pro-life movement is to help the American people expand beyond rights talk and move toward the virtue of solidarity—solidarity with the unborn, solidarity with others who are vulnerable, solidarity with those upon whom these most vulnerable persons depend.” In sum, and as some of us have been arguing for decades, the pro-life cause is the cause of liberalism rightly understood but tragically abandoned by almost all who now think of themselves as liberals.

■ This is, I suppose, a Louisiana turn on Hilaire Belloc’s little rhyme: “Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, / There’s laughter and dancing and good red wine. / At least I’ve always found it so. / *Benedicamus Domino!*” It happened some months ago, but the clipping has just come to my attention. Kraemer is a very small and very poor little town down in the bayou in which people make what living they can from selling alligator skins and skulls. The local paper, the *Beauregard Daily*, carried the following obituary: “Willie ‘One Eye’ Kraemer, 91, a native and resident of Kraemer, died Saturday, Dec. 24, 2005. Visitation will be from 5 to 10 p.m. today and from 8 a.m. to funeral time Thursday at St. Lawrence Church in Kraemer. Mass will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at the church, with burial in the church cemetery.” After listing numerous survivors and those who went before, the obituary concludes with this: “He hunted alligators and enjoyed drinking. He was Catholic.” Rest in peace, One Eye.

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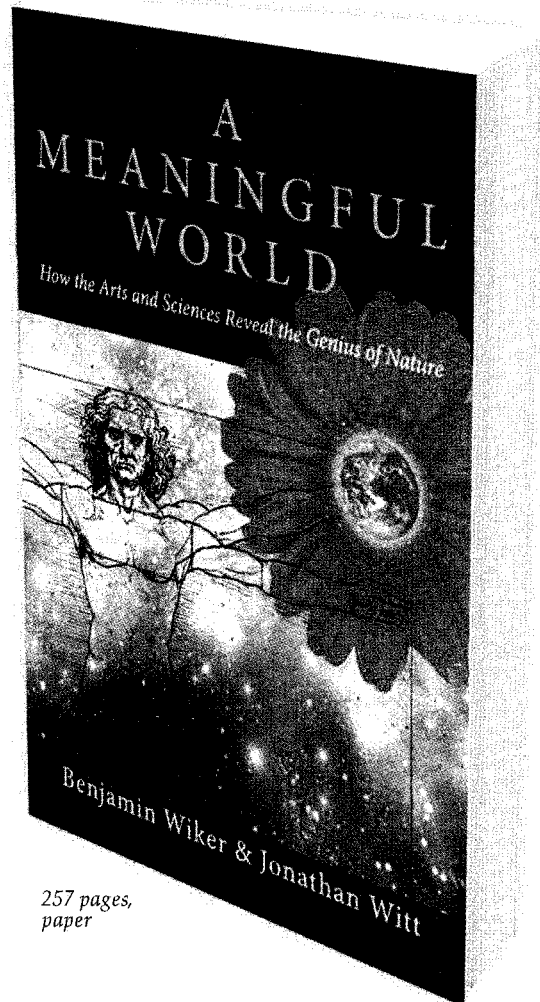
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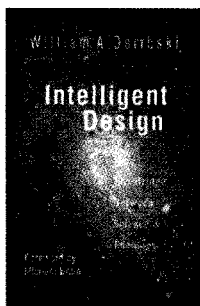
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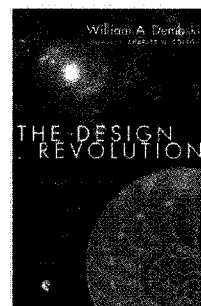
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